NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 08239225 3

# HOBURN—
# CALLED OF GOD

W. F. OLDHAM

★ PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY. FEB 15 1919

Thoburn

AN

OLdhAM

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/thoburncalledofg00oldh

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

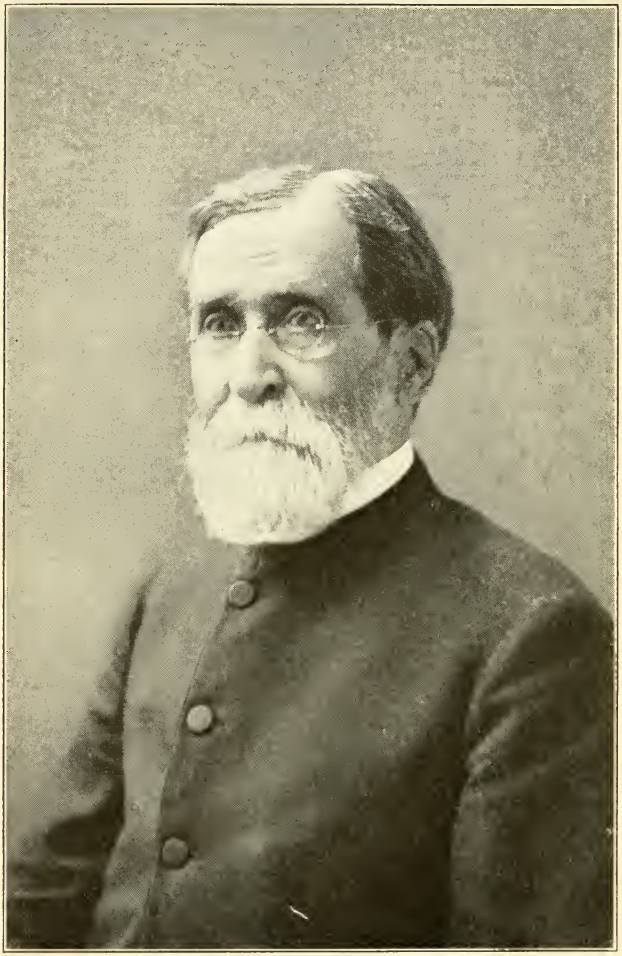
—

Malaysia: Nature's Wonderland
16mo, net, 35 cents

India, Malaysia, and the Philippines
12mo, net, $1.00

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS



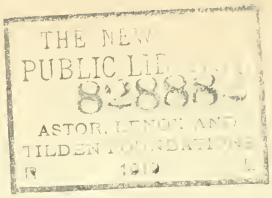
BISHOP JAMES M. THOBURN

# THOBURN—
# CALLED OF GOD

BY

**W. F. OLDHAM**
Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church

THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN
NEW YORK CINCINNATI


THE NEW
PUBLIC LIB
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 191

Copyright, 1918, by
W. F. OLDHAM

# CONTENTS


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| | FOREWORD | 7 |
| I. | THE MAN FOR INDIA | 13 |
| II. | THOBURN—EARLY DAYS | 20 |
| III. | UNCONSCIOUS PREPARATION AND CONVERSION | 23 |
| IV. | CALLED TO PREACH | 35 |
| V. | CALLED TO FOREIGN MISSIONARY SERVICE | 41 |
| VI. | CALLED TO FACE A LIFE TASK | 54 |
| VII. | CALLED TO MOMENTOUS EXPERIENCES: EARLY BAPTISM OF LOW-CASTE PEOPLE | 61 |
| VIII. | CALLED TO HELP CREATE A WOMAN'S MISSIONARY MOVEMENT | 71 |
| IX. | CALLED ACROSS THE GANGES | 81 |
| X. | LED TO SUMMON WILLIAM TAYLOR | 86 |
| XI. | PREPARED AND CALLED TO CALCUTTA | 96 |
| XII. | CALLED TO FARTHER INDIA | 109 |
| XIII. | CALLED TO A GREAT ADVENTURE | 125 |
| XIV. | CALLED TO THE MISSIONARY BISHOPRIC | 139 |
| XV. | CALLED TO THE FARTHEST EAST | 148 |
| XVI. | CALLED TO A QUIET HOUR | 162 |
| XVII. | QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS | 170 |
| XVIII. | PERSONAL TRIBUTE FROM BISHOP WARNE | 177 |

## FOREWORD

Two men have profoundly affected the writer during his life, in those deeper realms of thought and feeling and purpose into which we consciously admit but few persons. Both of these men have become bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church. James W. Bashford continues in the fullness of matured powers not only to strengthen the heart of the young church and wisely to direct its plans in the great waking life of China, but also to influence powerfully the public life of the land of his manhood's adoption. The other has lived out the full measure of his active years, and, as missionary, statesman, and builder, has won for himself a unique place in the annals of missionary achievement. He still lives among us with undimmed vision for the stars that fill his sky. Amid the scenes of his youth, he lingers amongst those who love him, an inspiration and a blessing.

At his request the writer hesitatingly undertakes this brief recital of the capital

events of a most eventful life. While he hesitates, lest his unskilled hand may fail to portray the great inspiring picture of a nobly lived life, he yet recognizes certain elements of fitness in being chosen as the chronicler of the outstanding events of the Bishop's life. For he knows somewhat intimately India and the neighboring islands; was the junior associated with the Bishop in the founding of the Malaysia Mission—an achievement which the Bishop has always accounted his *"magnum opus"*—and, above all, holds the subject of this book in deep, reverent affection. And lovers are the only folks who see, for they, led by affection, go past all outward seeming and see the inner truth and beauty.

To reassure the reader, let it be said at once that Bishop Thoburn's voluminous records of his own life will be largely drawn upon. All that this editor claims to do is to so arrange the data as to put before the reader the man in the high moments of his lifework. And, in these, Thoburn will speak for himself. The writer's words are merely the thread on which the pearls of this rich personality are strung.

And, let it be noted, this does not design to be a "biography." The Bishop's most earnest wish is, not that his life story be recorded, but that specific attention be called to the fact of the divine leading in all the important episodes of his life. He is among those who hold the belief, with something of intensity, that God's Spirit guides humble and inquiring believers every step of their earthly path; and his desire is to reaffirm this truth and glorify the covenant-keeping God in reciting how, in one man's life, the voice that has promised to say, "This is the way, walk ye in it," has sounded in his ears and has been literally verified in his life. He is jealous that from the Christian heritage shall not be abstracted, by any play of rationalistic thought, the comfort and the strength vouchsafed to the Christian believer who knows he is "called" not only to a special career, but also, that in the various steps of that career he may expect the guidance of the "pillar of cloud by day" and "the pillar of fire by night."

In the following conversation, which is reported *verbatim,* the Bishop speaks for himself:

"Bishop, why do you wish me to make a record of the outstanding events of your life?"

"My immediate purpose is this, that God has been in my life at important points, from time to time; and so unmistakably has he been with me that I feel not only that it is my duty to confess what I have received directly from him, but I feel that I owe it to my fellow men. In other words, my life furnishes a testimony to the fact that God has been with me, not only in a general way, all the time, but especially at set times and in distinctive ways his presence has been unmistakable. And I would that all who know me could have the same tokens of the Divine Presence that I have enjoyed. So far as the past is concerned, my mind rests upon certain instances, such as when I left college, I believed that God led me out to become a preacher of the message which he would give me, and it has been so all along the way."

"How have these divine illuminations come to you?"

"It would be difficult to describe it in a way which another would understand. Probably temperament has something to do with

the method of illumination. But while, in a general way, I have gone through these experiences day by day, yet there have been periods when there has been something like special illumination of the mind and soul."

"With a clear direction as to which way you should move?"

"Yes."

"Are you conscious at the time of the separation between what I might call the divine impression, and the workings of your own mind on the data?"

"No. My mind is in an inquiring mood, for a shorter or longer time, and then comes an impression which removes doubts and gives me a consciousness that I am standing on firm ground."

It is to illustrate this truth of the Bishop's claim, that God has distinct direction for all the courses of life, that we sketch the chief events of his own career, letting him tell the inner sources of motives and origins.

If the reading of the brief volume shall quicken faith and deepen trust in an ever present God, the Bishop's object will be accomplished.

WM. F. OLDHAM.

# CHAPTER I

## THE MAN FOR INDIA

The great contribution that the home church makes to the peoples in foreign lands is the gift of her choicest sons and daughters. When opportunities for medical help, for education, and for sanitation and industrial development are opened to backward peoples, or to civilizations that have not kept step with the movements that have brought us to the strange new day in which we live, great service is rendered. But when, with these gifts of material equipment, the church sends carefully chosen men and women to so use this equipment as to quicken the people's understanding and arouse the slumbering spirit, or to quicken it so that it may throw off the spiritual fetters that arrest its progress, the value of the gift is multiplied many times. The doctor, if a "living soul," is worth many times the hospital building; the teacher, if a "quickening spirit," is a greater factor in bringing new life to a people than a complete set of university buildings. In-

deed, it may boldly be said that not only is the contribution of chosen lives the greater contribution, but it gives significance to all the rest.

The increasing care of the church in selecting these agents of the gospel, that only duly equipped and God-anointed men shall be sent, attests our deepening belief in the matter. It is, therefore, with devout thankfulness to the great Father who holds all men in his loving thought that we call attention to the peculiar worth and felicity of the gift the Methodist Episcopal Church made to the peoples of India when, following the leadings of the Holy Spirit, James M. Thoburn was selected and sent to that great, peculiar, and difficult field.

Let us consider briefly the field and the man. India is peculiarly the "Orient." Here, more than anywhere else, life is held in molds or runs in channels most remote from the thoughts, or even the comprehension, of the West. But at the heart of this strange and complex life is a burning, passionate regard for religion, and with it a dreamy, mystic conception of what religion is and wherein it consists. Strange and

subtle philosophies, rooted in pantheism or in thoroughgoing agnosticism, have filtered down into the poetic and imaginative soul of even the plain and unlearned people. And the masses, though unreasoning and inarticulate, are yet spiritually penetrated with a vague sense that life is illusory and transient. Add to this an almost universal prepossession to belief in the transmigration of the soul and a devotion and surrender to the customs and traditions of the past. It will at once be seen how this fragment of "the all" passing through its illusory experiences, with its "now" fixed in the matrix of all its yesterdays and shaping all its morrows, would vehemently resist any teaching of a discrete individual soul, with the possibility of its seeking and finding in a Saviour God both pardon for past sin and power to assert its moral sovereignty and to exercise its spiritual energy, moment by moment, as the days come and go. Further, add to this a very deep pride of race, a high religious conceit, and a strong suspicion of all things new and unfamiliar, and then judge the character of the gospel agent whom you would select to send to India.

We would immediately pass over many a man admirably fitted to serve at home, or among some differently constituted people —the man of dogmatic speech; the man without delicate antennæ to discern and quick susceptibility to feel and sympathize with the earnest spiritual struggles and aspirations of men of utterly other mental training and outlook; the man whose religious teaching can all be conveyed in clear, logical propositions, and to whom all movements must be in direct straight lines to escape the reproach of insincerity; the man without reverence for the past and, therefore, without any fellow feeling for that mental attitude which greatly dreads to assert the individual as over against both the solid traditions of the centuries and the social caste organism in which those traditions are preserved; the man of bold, venturesome spirit, who knows nothing of what it costs a trembling, hesitant soul that has been built into a social and religious fabric, like a brick in a wall, to seek to break out of that wall to the dismay and, indeed, to the rending of the integrity of the whole order to which it belongs. In a word, your straightforward,

honest, vigorous, sympathetic, and aggressively energetic man, bent on taking short cuts everywhere, and having all others go across lots with him, is not the man you would select for dreamy, nonventuresome, conservative, staid India.

In Thoburn, boy though he was when he first appeared as a missionary, were the opposites of all the undesirable qualities we have sketched, for he strangely combined great personal faith and conviction of the divine truth of the Christian religion with the utmost appreciation of the blind struggles toward the Light of many a devout Hindu "seeker after God." He seemed, with less effort than most Western men, to enter into the subtle, mystic thinking of India. Himself a singular blend of the mystical enthusiast and the clear-seeing, practically minded man of America, in him the East and West met and each supplemented and fulfilled the other as in very, very few. The clear, penetrating intellect for affairs; the eye to see, with capacity to do, is in him so happily blended with a mysticism that borders on the realms of the superstitious without ever touching the line, that we might

truthfully know one side of him without ever suspecting the other. In the commingling and the balance of these very diverse elements, however, has been his marvelous strength. Without this analysis of this man we could neither understand nor explain the accomplishments of his fruitful life.

Then, too, he is a religious democrat. He has known nothing of race prejudice nor of social caste feeling. Thrown with men of the highest social and official positions, he has ever been eager to approach and has been easily accessible to the low-caste and the outcaste of all races. Men and women have always been to him the subjects of his deep concern; and he has ever seen not the drunken white man, or harlot, or low-caste Hindu, or abusive Mohammedan, nor the military general or commissioner or high-placed man of wealth, but in all and each he has seen an immortal being, the defaced image of God, with infinite possibilities and, therefore of large potential value. And he has been the servant and the brother of all, seeking to recover each to the restored image of his Saviour God. A man he is of deep religious fervor, of unshaken religious con-

viction, of intense belief that the gospel he bears is the only real hope of mankind—a man, too, of a loving heart, of democratic spirit, holding all men in reverence for the possibilities that are in them; with eyes to see God in unusual settings and to see large values in truth under unusual forms and amid unfamiliar surroundings; a man with kindness of heart, of sacrificial spirit, eager to serve and, with it all a man of gracious manners and winsome speech.

How splendid the gift to India the readers of this book will see, if the writer can at all interpret to them the real James M. Thoburn.

## CHAPTER II

## THOBURN—EARLY DAYS

"If you would build a man, begin with his grandmother." Thoburn's grandmother was "a woman of strong character, notable courage, and decided views in both religious and political matters." Her husband was nominally a Unitarian; but, seeking controversy with a visiting Methodist preacher, he was so impressed by that doughty traveler that the Crawford home in the little village of Rallo, County Antrim, Ireland, became the local headquarters of Methodism.

From this Irish home came Jane Lyle Crawford, a young woman of marked quality, tinged with the mystic quality that she was so notably to impart to her son.

Meanwhile, in another Irish village named Mollusk, near Belfast, another Methodist itinerant, meeting a young Irishman standing in the door of his widowed mother's cottage, shook hands with him heartily and asked his name.

"My name is Matthew Thoburn."

"Well, Matthew, I am going to preach this evening in yonder cottage; won't you come and hear me and bring your mother with you?"

The couple went. That evening young Matthew was informally left in spiritual charge of the deeply impressed company as "class leader" until the preacher should return. A class leader and an effective exhorter Matthew Thoburn remained through life. It was when addressing a meeting Matthew met Jane Lyle Crawford.

She recognized in him at once the very person whom she believed God had shown her in a dream of the night when, sorrowing for her dead father, God had strengthened her heart by assuring her she had a life-work to do, and showed her the partner of her life career. This belief in visions and experiences of them recurs strangely in her son's life.

The Thoburns soon after their marriage sailed for America and settled in Saint Clairsville, Ohio, where was born on the seventh of March, 1836, their seventh child, a son, whom they named James Mills. Other

children of this Irish family in America were an older sister—Ellen, afterward Mrs. General B. R. Cowen, for years the splendid leader of the Woman's Foreign Missionary forces in the Cincinnati Branch; and Isabella Thoburn of sainted memory, a woman of rare power and ability, one of the first two women missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church to any foreign field and the founder of the first Christian Woman's College in Asia—the Isabella Thoburn College, in Lucknow, India. "God bless the Irish." He does; and has often used them to convey his blessing, as when he sent two such as the Thoburns, James and Isabella, to India.

## CHAPTER III

## UNCONSCIOUS PREPARATION AND CONVERSION

JAMES was a bright lad, and his discerning mother anticipated greatness for her boy, as mothers have ever done. When coming from Belfast, in Ireland, to her brother in Guernsey County, Ohio, before James was born, she saw beside the road the handsomest building she had yet seen in America. It was a four-story brick building which still stands beautiful and unshamed among numerous and handsome buildings which now surround it on the campus of one of western Pennsylvania's best-equipped schools—Allegheny College. It was Bentley Hall—and many an Alleghenian who reads these lines will both recall with affection old Bentley Hall, and send thoughts of gratitude and thanks to President Crawford, whose magic wand has surrounded Bentley Hall with other noble buildings.

When James was fourteen and considered by his father to be a very bright lad, they

were visited by a young college graduate, the late Dr. W. A. Davidson.

"One evening when he was with us, as we sat around our hospitable fireplace, my father asked him to test my knowledge of algebra, remarking at the same time that I had been through my algebra more than once. The preacher very readily undertook the task, but finding that I knew nothing about the science, except the method of 'doing the sums,' he turned abruptly to my father and said, 'Your little boy knows nothing about algebra.' To me this was a startling announcement. The teaching of those days was often imperfect, and I had not yet learned how to study on the independent basis. Our young pastor then explained the situation and kindly advised me to go back to the first page of arithmetic and begin all over again. He added that he would advise me to go to Allegheny College, where he himself had graduated, and not to rest until I had completed a full college course. I resolved to follow his advice, but little dreamed that in the early future a way would be opened for me, but only through bereavement and sorrow."

His father died, leaving a small estate to be divided among many children. But it was not the Thoburn way to be discouraged. The mother managed to find a little money for her son. "She gave me $162.50, and, telling me to spend this carefully, she sent me away, with her blessing."

"I understood perfectly well that this small sum would not suffice to keep me very long, but I was still young, with some of my boyhood and all of my youth ahead of me, and did not for a moment feel anxious for my financial future. I used all possible economy, and still remember that when I returned at the end of seven months I had expended only $87.50." It was characteristic of the independent spirit of the boy, even as early as in his fifteenth year, that, on arriving in Meadville, Pennsylvania, instead of "calling on President Barker and delivering my letter, I set off immediately to find a boarding house, and in the course of the afternoon succeeded in finding a good place on the brow of the hill overlooking the town and about half a mile from the village. Four young men and a boy somewhat younger than myself made up the company of stu-

dents who shared with me the shelter of my new home. On Monday morning, August 23, 1851, my name was enrolled as a student of Allegheny College, and I selected my studies without asking or being asked a question of any kind. When this was done to my satisfaction I went in the afternoon to call on Dr. Barker, our college president, who read my letter of introduction, asked me a few questions, and expressed himself as satisfied with my arrangements which I had made. Six years later I received my diploma from his hands."

Concerning his religious condition at this time, he says: "I was not a member of the church, simply a well-meaning boy, in my fifteenth year. I had never been prayerless in my life. From my earliest consciousness I had been taught to pray, even if I had to do so in silence, or probably after getting into bed. I never omitted it. I took no part in the religious life of the college, until my awakening. During my second year at college, at the time of revival, I became very deeply awakened. This was increased by the conversion of my brother David, who was with me. His conversion was clear, and

the effect was permanent in his case. I went forward for prayers in a great religious revival then in progress, at the old brick church, but found no light. The meeting was managed very badly. A boy such as I got little attention, and the advice given was simply random expressions which led nowhere. The college president gave me a week's absence from my recitations, but even when alone I made no progress."

The reason is evident; for young Thoburn was eminently reasonable in his approaches to the spiritual life. He has never been favorable to emotional outbursts. Perhaps he has not recognized their value with lethargic natures, where there is knowledge that needs to be galvanized into action.

The entire episode is so important that a full statement from the Bishop follows:

"On Sunday morning I went to church with a young man from Pittsburgh. As we went down to town I was full of spirits and quite gay in my manner, but all the time I was more or less moved by feelings which I did not understand. We entered the church, which was crowded, and found seats in a remote corner of the gallery. Bishop Kings-

ley, who was then professor of mathematics in our college, preached. His theme was the final judgment given in the book of Revelation, 'And I saw a great white throne,' etc. The familiar words impressed me deeply, and as the sermon proceeded I began to become agitated in a peculiar way. The sermon was impressive and at times eloquent, but a part of it seemed to me speculative and in a measure weak. But I was soon in no mood to notice the merits or demerits of the sermon. Like Paul in olden times, the professor reasoned of righteousness and judgment, and the impression made upon me was like that made upon the sinner in olden times. I trembled—trembled until I found myself trying to hold my knees steady lest my student friend should notice my agitation. But I soon became oblivious to all considerations of this kind, and determined that I would try and make my peace with God at once.

"At the close of his sermon the professor called on all who were awakened to a sense of their danger to come and kneel at the altar, while the people prayed for them. My mind was fully made up, and I turned at

once to my friend and proposed that we go forward together. A blow in the face could hardly have startled him more. He was almost dumb with astonishment, but managed to decline my proposal. Dr. Robbins, who sat near us, overheard my remark, and kindly advised me to go alone. This I would have done in any case, and I rose, picked my way down among the young men and boys who crowded the stairs, and walked forward and fell upon my knees and wept bitterly. When the singing ceased Dr. Barker was asked to lead in prayer. He was evidently deeply moved, and began to pray in language which I could easily adopt as my own. I have often thought that if the people around had only kept quiet so that I could have heard that prayer to its end I might have been led step by step to the cross, and thus have found Christ as a living Saviour at the very outset. But it was not so to be. A score of men and probably women too, began to pray in loud tones, and in a moment all was confusion around me. No one came to instruct me, and, indeed, it seemed as if no one thought further about me. I had gone forward for prayers, and all took it for granted

that in some way or another I could come out all right. For five successive nights this routine continued. I could hear nothing and understand nothing. Now and then I would hear some one shouting above me, 'Look up, my brother,' or some such expression of the kind, but only once in the course of five evenings was an intelligent effort made to find out my real condition and teach me how to trust in Christ. This was done by Professor Hamnett, who spent some time in trying to find out my difficulties and to lead me into the light.

"In later years I have often been led to protest against the way in which this kind of work is too often done. In many places invitations are given for awakened persons to come forward for prayers, but when they accept the call a scene of disorder takes the place of intelligent prayer, and instruction is made nothing of. Once not very long ago I heard a preacher urging the people to pray aloud and all together: 'People may not understand you, but God understands you. Don't be afraid to let your voices be heard,' etc. In Paul's day it was not considered a light thing to pray with the understanding,

but in some places this counts for little now."

Following this he joined the church, but God would not let one for whom and from whom he expected great things, to rest in any such "twilight of the soul."

His money having given out, he was obliged to find a place as a teacher. This he did in Lloydsville, Ohio; and, while teaching there, a revival of religion commenced, and the method of its progress was much better suited to the brooding young teacher. He says that while attending the village church a revival of religion occurred in which many young people were converted. The pastor made the announcement that Mr. Thoburn would lead the class meeting consisting of these young Christians. "He added that the first meeting would take place in the schoolhouse the next morning at nine o'clock. This was startling news. I had never prayed audibly in my life. I knew nothing about some mysteries of the spiritual life with which most of the members of my class had already become familiar, but at last I saw it was imperative that I should obey. I accordingly went to the meeting

and found a list of twenty-seven members and probationers who had been assigned to me for spiritual oversight. I told them frankly how I stood, but added that I intended to do my best, and leave the result to God. A visitor led the devotions that day, and before the next Sunday came round I was in the light, and found it a joy to pray, or speak, or do anything that came to me in the way of my duty as a servant of Jesus Christ.

"In these later days I often hear in song the words of the refrain, 'Trust and obey.' I had tried to trust, but had assumed that I could not obey. Now the light had come, and life had become sweet, and the service of Christ was like daily food. The days went pleasantly and rapidly by, and all too soon the date came round at which I had determined to return to college. My class of twenty-seven had increased to over fifty, and sweet harmony and love had prevailed in all our meetings and social intercourse. If I had found it hard to gain an entrance into this little village, I found it much harder to get away from it. The directors were ready to meet any and every possible demand, and

the people with one voice begged me to remain. The circuit preacher, the Rev. N. C. Worthington, advised and urged me to enter the Conference at once, and assured me that the door was wide open for me to enter. But something, a feeling which I could not define, impelled me to go back to college. I was only nineteen, and very youthful in appearance, and wisely judged that I was too young for the responsibilities of Conference membership, even if the question of my call to the work of preaching had been clearly and definitely settled. As yet, however, this was still an open question with me. I was not sure that God had chosen me for this work, and appreciated the danger of a mistake in a matter in which there was so much at stake, both for the church and myself. I accordingly bade adieu to Lloydsville and the dear circle of young people to whom I had become greatly attached, and in the early autumn returned to Meadville and entered the junior class in Allegheny College."

Thus did God clearly lead this young disciple into the clear light of the knowledge of personal salvation, and the second great step was taken in the fitting of a strong mis-

sionary for that wonderful career in which, amid strange people and in other tongues, he was to declare unto many the gospel of "the remission of sins" through faith in the atoning Saviour.

## CHAPTER IV

## CALLED TO PREACH

Is there a distinctive "call to preach," or is much of what is so recorded in religious biography the mere subjective impression of the young mind gathered largely from traditions current in pious circles?

If a young man is a sincere Christian, has a good education and agreeable manners, possesses some powers of utterance and some facility in making friends and in securing the cooperation of others in religious projects—when he considers his lifework—may he not confidently assume that in the ordained ministry he will find a suitable career?

The question is raised not to attempt an answer, or even to raise a discussion, but simply to record how one young man found his way into this sacred calling, who has proved, in his own case at least, the validity of the claim that God, in this most practical day, still continues to distinctly convey to the

inquiring mind his will regarding the particular investment of the individual life.

On this subject Bishop Thoburn feels deeply, and said in regard to his own personal experience: "When I began to preach I soon began to feel the need of a clear and definite call to that work. I had conscientiously come to the conclusion that God would have me preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, but when I seemed to preach in vain, when people listened and yet did not seem to hear, and when no tangible result appeared in any quarter, I began to feel that life under such conditions would be insupportable. One afternoon during a series of meetings in Marlborough, Ohio, I went out into the woods near the village, and kneeling alone among the branches of a fallen maple tree, I talked the matter over with my Saviour, and there alone with him I received my clear and distinct commission to go and preach his gospel to dying men. I heard no words, but the commission could not have been more specific and clear had the visible Son of God said to me, 'Go preach my gospel.' From that hour I could preach with or without visible results. A foundation of adamant

had glided under my feet, and I knew for Whom I was to speak, and what the message was with which I had been intrusted."

He says on the general subject: "The whole subject of divine calls should be studied not only more carefully, but also more generally than has been usual in the past. In a great multitude of cases no special direction is needed, but when it is needed, to what extent is it expected, and how are God's tokens to be interpreted? A very wide door opens before us when we ask these questions, and God has been explicit in promising help. 'In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' I was left in no doubt or uncertainty concerning my call to missionary service in India. Many tokens were given, and many incidents were made to 'work together.' "

His mind was now fixed. His salary was but one hundred dollars a year, and more lucrative employment was offered him. But he knew he was "called to preach." His ministry in the homeland was brief, for he was soon to go to his real life task in a far country. But how intelligent, sane, and fruitful his home ministry was in its less

than two years may be learned from his own record.

"My last special work before leaving my circuit was in the village of Greensburgh, Ohio. My senior preacher had been detained by illness in his family, and had asked me to take charge of a series of revival meetings at that place in his absence, and I was more than glad to do so. Up to this time I had never had charge of meetings of this kind, and for several reasons I coveted the privilege. The village was not large, but it contained three churches, and a majority of the people were communicants. I met with few difficulties at the outset, but very soon discovered that we were going to have enough to do. When I requested awakened persons to come forward for prayers there was an immediate response. Quite a number came, and there seemed to be deep and genuine feeling on the part of most of them. But the church was small, and the vacant space around the pulpit was limited, and it was simply impossible to instruct the seekers intelligently. Although much good resulted, yet the main result was not satisfactory. Sinners were not converted. The persons who

came out publicly to ask for prayers were in some cases crowded aside, and the general impression made was unfavorable.

"After vainly trying to overcome this difficulty and finding it impossible to do so in such cramped quarters, I announced I would be in the church at 4 o'clock the following afternoon, and would meet any persons who wished to have a talk with me about their spiritual interests. To my surprise, when I repaired to the church at the appointed hour I found so large a company that it seemed like a congregation met for a service, and the difficulty I experienced was that there were too many for a free talk with each separately. I therefore spoke to the entire company. The result surprised my expectations. Many professed to see the way of faith clearly, and to emerge out of darkness, or at least twilight, into the clear light of God. All through these long years I have remembered with pleasure and gratitude those meetings which I was permitted to hold on the eve of my departure for my home in the distant East, and in later days I have often found occasion to repeat the plan pursued in that early day. All per-

sons, especially all young persons, when seriously concerned about their spiritual interests, not only need instruction in the general sense of that word, but they need it in spiritual measure, line upon line, precept upon precept, and the utmost care should be taken to adapt the teaching in such cases to the special condition of the party concerned."

## CHAPTER V

## CALLED TO FOREIGN MISSIONARY SERVICE

In the days of his unconscious preparation for the work before him, when he was but seventeen years old, he purchased a book not too attractively named Youthful Piety, which "contained two sermons by Dr. Olin." The reading of these powerfully affected him:

"One day during the play hour I walked out under the trees and was reading one of these sermons when I came upon this passage: 'Several of our great benevolent enterprises which are rapidly extending their influence to the remotest nations of the earth, were projected by young men while they were still undergraduates; and Mills, and Judson, and Newell passed immediately from the schools into the distant lands where they laid the foundations of Christian empires.'

"As I read these words a very remarkable impression was made upon my mind and

heart. Up to that hour I had never felt any special interest in foreign missions, but in a moment, almost like a gentle flash of light, an impression was made upon my mind that here was to be my lifework. At some time, in some way, I was to be sent out to some distant land where my life was to be devoted to missionary work. This conviction or manifestation, or perhaps vision would be a better word, was very clear, and in after years I recalled the fact that the word 'empires' had made a distinct impression on my mind. A great, a very great, work was to be done. Nations were to be evangelized, empires were to be founded.

"The unexpected impression was not welcomed by me, and I was more than willing to be persuaded that it had been a mere flight of fancy; but the impression made had been too deep and too distinct to be easily effaced. I have noticed all through life that I am rarely moved to speak freely of my deepest convictions, and sometimes I have been reminded of our Saviour's request to the three favored disciples to 'tell the vision to no man.' In later years I have felt no reticence in speaking on the subject, but at the time

I could not have explained the incident clearly, and might have been misled by honest but mistaken friends. As far as any religious expectance was concerned, I was at best walking in a very dim twilight, and was by no means qualified to form a correct opinion upon a manifestation of this kind. As a matter of fact, however, from this time forward I was never able to dismiss from my mind a misgiving that my ultimate destination would be some field in the great heathen world."

Five years later he began to be inwardly disturbed, and slowly but surely he was reaching the conclusion that he was to go to India.

But God, who, in his grace, talks to the deeps in men through the Holy Spirit, will also through his providence confirm the inward impression by opening the door of opportunity. Perhaps it may be said there are three voices in which God speaks to his obedient and listening servants: in their own souls, through the voice of the church, and through the door of opportunity. Happy is he whom all three voices call unitedly, each confirming the others.

But what if any of these three voices fail to call? He would better wait prayerfully, patiently. If it be God's plan for him, God will utter himself so that the depths within and the breadths without will answer to each other, and the way will be made plain. And, if there be times of uncertainty and waiting, may these not be for the testing of faith and added discipline of soul? In James Thoburn's case the inward pressure presently found the outer response in opportunity and invitation. He writes:

"There began to flit across my heart a misgiving that my work in Ohio was nearly over, that my call to missionary work was soon to be brought to a definite issue, and that the field of my future labor would be India. How this definite and disquieting conviction began I cannot tell. I never could recall its origin, or tell how it had taken possession of my mind. I only know that the issue was at last being forced upon me, and must soon be decided definitely for all time to come. One day I came in from the post office and sat down to read The Christian Advocate and Journal, at that time edited by Dr. Abel Stevens. The leading editorial was an ap-

peal to the young men of the church, and it closed with a statement that six young men were urgently needed for India, and asked where they were to be found. I was powerfully moved by the appeal, not so much by anything it contained as by a strong impression that I ought to be one of the six young men to go forth in response to the call. I dropped the paper and fell on my knees, and promised God that I would accept the call if only he would make it clear that he sent me. I asked for some token, for some definite indication that I was called from above, not only in the general way to become a missionary, but to that special field, and at that special time. I had not long to wait for an answer.

"Strangely enough, I had not, up to this time, sought counsel from any Christian friend. I had barely mentioned the fact, on two or three occasions in the course of two or three years, that I had more or less of a conviction that I should become a missionary; but for reasons which I did not then understand, I felt averse to speaking to intimate friends on the subject.

"I had thus far felt more and more like

keeping silence about the matter, but now a point was reached where I felt that I must speak; I might be mistaking my convictions. I had promised to obey the voice of the church, and, if God spoke to me directly, he would also speak to me through the church. If he were to bid me go and at the same time bid the church to send me, the latter call would be a strong confirmation of the former. My presiding elder was the immediate channel of authority through which I received the commands of the church, and hence I resolved to seek his advice. If he thought favorably of the matter, I would take further steps; but, if he disapproved of it, I would pause and wait for more light; or, possibly, dismiss the subject from my mind altogether."

Meanwhile, the God who was talking to the young preacher in the depths, was hastening to him in the person of the presiding elder:

"He came at an early hour, having ridden on horseback from the nearest railroad station, and met me at the house of Brother Peter Keener, a cabinet-maker, who was one of the few members we had in that French

settlement. Keener's house was one of my familiar stopping places, and at the head of the stairway there was a tiny little room, barely large enough to contain a bed, a chair, a table, and a candlestick, where I had often slept when on weekly rounds on the circuit. It was a snowy morning, and the presiding elder was sitting with his feet to the stove, which stood in the cozy little room below, when he remarked:

"'I met Bishop Janes on the train this morning.'

"'Bishop Janes!' I replied. 'What can he be doing out here?'

"'He is on his way West, looking for missionaries for India. He wants six immediately.'

"My heart leaped into my throat, but before I could say anything the elder continued:

"'James, how would *you* like to go?'

"'It is very singular,' I said, 'but I have come here with the special purpose of asking your advice about going to India.'

"'Well, I must tell you that you have been in my mind all morning. I incline to think

you ought to go. I have felt so ever since the Bishop told me of his errand.'

"I went upstairs to the little prophet chamber and knelt down to seek for guidance from above, but I could not pray. God poured his spirit upon me from on high, and my heart so overflowed with a hallowed feeling of love and joy that I could not utter a word. Before I could ask, God had answered. It was not so much a call to India that I received as an acceptance for India. I did not receive any message, or realize any new conviction, or come down from my sacred audience with God feeling the matter was forever settled, and yet that hour stands out in my life as the burning bush must have stood in the memory of Moses.

"It was my burning bush. It has followed me through all the years which have passed like a Divine Presence; and a hundred times when wearied and oppressed with doubts and discouragements have I fallen on my knees and pleaded with God, by the hallowed memories of that hour of blessing, to prove faithful to the promise of his love and care which was then burned into my very soul. It has been one long inspiration, an unfailing

source of strength and courage, when these virtues seemed about to fail.

"Practically, the question of my going to India was settled when I came down from that little room, but I knew it not."

Long years afterward, when the reality and efficiency of the call had been tested through over fifty years of phenomenal service, he says concerning it:

"My call was clear and distinct, aside altogether from the incidents connected with it, and has stood out in my past life like a mountain peak in a level plain. The thought of doubting it has never for a single moment occurred to me. It was specific. I was to go to India. I was to spend my life there. I was to go for my Master, the same Saviour as the one calling me. I was to go in his name—to represent him there. No hiding place for doubt was left for me. The sun of righteousness illuminated my whole horizon."

There is both pathos and humor in the Bishop's account of the sailing of that early group of missionaries to India to join the lion-hearted Butlers, who were out there alone through all the stormy days of the In-

dian Mutiny, and were now looking eagerly for promised reenforcements:

"As we were to sail from Boston, it was arranged that were to go to Lynn, the seat of the New England Conference, where we were to be ordained a few days before the date of our sailing. We arrived at Lynn on the 7th of April, and found the Conference in session. Bishop Ames presided, and some of the notable men of the church were present. Dr. W. F. Warren was one of the young men ordained on Sunday, and Gilbert Haven, then a prominent but not yet a leading member of the Conference, spoke at one of the anniversaries. An incident which occurred at the Sunday school anniversary has lingered in my memory. The church was crowded, and I could only get room to stand in the vestibule, near the door. I was standing leaning against the stairway listening to a thousand children singing,

> "'In heaven above, where all is love,
> There'll be no more sorrow there.'

In those days when my heart was burdened with a certain kind of quiet sadness, these words came to me with a sweet, soothing in-

fluence which I shall never forget. A stranger stood by me, and noticing that he seemed to recognize me, I said: 'What sweet singing!'

" 'You'd better enjoy it all you can,' he replied, 'for you will never hear such singing again.'

"The words dropped upon my heart like lead. I was reminded that I was leaving privileges which had become interwoven with my daily happiness; but my unbelieving heart did not then dare to hope that in other tongues I should hear the songs of Zion warbled by the glad young voices of thousands rescued from the worship of idols. Often since that day, when listening to glad songs of praise in India, have I thought of the singers at Lynn, and my strange slowness to believe that their song was to be taken up by all the little ones of earth.

"At eight o'clock on Tuesday morning, April the 12th, we went on board the little vessel which was to carry us to Calcutta. It was a snug little ship of only six hundred and fifty tons, carried a cargo of Wenham ice. A dozen friends accompanied us, and a brief service was held in the little cabin of the ship.

Instead of selecting a farewell hymn, we joined in singing,

"'O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace!'"

after which Dr. Durbin commended us in prayer to God, asking for protection at sea and victory on our distant battlefield. A tug took us in tow, but strong easterly winds kept us from getting out to sea till the morning of the 16th, when our vessel crept out of the harbor and began her long journey across the trackless sea. Late in the afternoon I went upon deck, and looking through the mist and rain took what I supposed was my last view of the shores of my native land. The distant hills were fast hiding themselves in mist and cloud, and the view was utterly cheerless and desolate. I ran my eye along the coast line, looked at the hills, thought of greener hills and brighter skies farther west, and then turned away to look beyond the everlasting hills for the golden gates of the city of light.

Happy the young missionary who goes

forth with such consecration to his task and with such assurance of the divine call and leadership. Happy the church that has such sons to send. Above all, happy the land and the people toward whom such Knights of the Cross set their faces to find high and holy adventure.

## CHAPTER VI

## CALLED TO FACE A LIFE TASK

While these notable reenforcements are on their way it would be well to review briefly the situation in India.

The Rev. Dr. and Mrs. William Butler were there. They had selected a central territory between the Ganges and the Jumna, in the two populous and important provinces of Oudh and Rohilkund. And while the Methodist missions have far transcended these early bounds, the fact that they are still the main center of the Methodist strength and influence, and that Lucknow, the capital of Oudh, is still the greatest Methodist center of the Indian empire, bears witness to the wisdom and sagacity of the Butler selection of field.

Soon after the starting of the mission, the Indian Mutiny broke out and threatened to destroy the very foundations of all Christian work throughout India. But what really happened was that the very horrors

of the Mutiny quickened Christian solicitude and interest in India. The devoted loyalty of the handful of Indian Christians to their Lord added confidence and admiration to solicitude. The Mutiny, so far from uprooting Christianity from India, only stimulated deeper interest and larger effort. As more recently in the Boxer Rebellion in China, "the ashes of the martyrs are the seed of the church." Among the other results was the sailing of the party of whom James M. Thoburn was one.

India has ever since been deep in the heart of American Methodism. It has proved to be at once our most picturesque, romantic, and fruitful mission field, and never more so than to-day, when tidal waves of salvation are carrying tens of thousands of converts into the Christian Church.

The India to which Thoburn went greeted him with an impressive presentation of the idolatry in which it was steeped. After four months of monotonous sailing they "sighted the hills of Orissa." "Going up on deck I saw a large, black object on the shore and was told that it was the world-renowned temple of Juggernaut. It seemed as if

heathenism had risen up to meet us at our coming and bid us defiance. My earliest missionary recollections had been associated with that temple and its hideous idol, and my mind and heart were strangely moved as I gazed upon the gloomy-looking black object before me. I was at the doorway of India, and began to feel eager for the strife which I knew was near at hand."

How prolonged that strife and how entrenched the people in their devotion to their idol gods, he was to learn through the long toilsome years. He was also to learn that deepest joy of delivering men by the thousands from the thraldom of fear that just such debasing conceptions of Deity as the Juggernauts of man's perverted imagination build.

The first years of the young missionary's life, though filled with labor and days of earnest devotion, do not call for special notice. Stationed at Naini Tal, on the slopes of the Himalayas, he preached in English to the soldiers of the British garrison, eagerly devoting himself, meanwhile, to the acquisition of the Hindustani, in which he early acquired much facility for ordinary

colloquial speech with the less educated. His English preaching was markedly effective; and the more so because he was forced to conclude his services in an hour and his sermons in thirty minutes. He says:

"The sermon was reduced to thirty minutes. I had been accustomed to make a formal introduction and to attempt a formal peroration. I cut off both of these at a stroke, and found that in doing so I had simply thrown away much useless wadding. Then I eliminated everything which I did not really wish to say, and which did not seem really important to be said, and found that I could give the people God's message a great deal more effectively in thirty minutes than in sixty. To my surprise, I found that the whole service was made more effective by the rigid limitations of time, and I have ever since maintained the rule which was enforced upon me by the Scotch major. If I wished to deliver an oration or a lecture, or to argue a question like a lawyer, I should ask for an hour's time at least; but when I come before people with a message from God, I prefer to be more like a man in haste. A messenger of the Almighty has

no business to saunter into a pulpit and waste five minutes in the lolling in an easy chair or sofa, no business to talk with the minister who sits beside him while the choir wastes precious time with operatic preludes and interludes, no business to perform the ritualistic duty of reading tedious and irrelevant lessons, to make long and tedious prayers, to waste five minutes in reading notices and then to spend one half the time devoted to the sermon in talk which might be omitted without the slightest loss to any human being. God's messenger should be a man in haste, and when standing before those to whom God has sent him, he should be very careful not to waste a single half-minute."

In the service of the English he was learning what afterward stood by him and the cause of Christianity in India in good stead.

The direct returns of his labor among the Indians were slight. It was two years before a single convert was baptized; and at the end of his first term of service the band of Christians was but small and feeble.

The missionary had married; a little son had been born, but the dear young wife sickened and died. The little nest was broken

up. The missionary began to have premonitions of coming changes in his work.

"What was in the future I did not know; but unconsciously the feeling was slowly creeping into my heart that my connection with Naini Tal was not to be permanent. He who mars our chosen plans can make our plans for us, and I began to feel that God's thoughts were above my fancies, God's promises above and beyond my hopes, and God's vineyard a wider sphere of labor than the choice little corner which I had thought to call my own."

Soon after the wife's death the missionary, accompanied by a faithful Indian servant, took his infant boy home, to spend less than eighteen months with him during the next twenty years. What self-crucifixion there is in such experiences many a sad-hearted but uncomplaining missionary parent knows!

During his home stay he was subtly tempted to remain and organize a "school for preparing missionaries." From this he was saved by the quiet but penetrating insight of his sister Isabella. He sought an interview with her on the subject. He says:

"I unfolded the plan without a shadow of misgiving, I was allowed to finish my story without interruption, and when I had told all we walked a few paces in silence. At last I asked, 'What do you think of it all? Why don't you tell me?'

"'If I remember correctly,' she replied, 'you said, when you went to India, you were sure God called you?'

"'Yes; and so I was.'

"'Did he call you?'

"'Yes; I have never doubted it for a moment; it was the clearest religious impression of any kind that I have ever received.'

"'Then my advice is this: whenever God gives you an equally clear call to leave India you may safely give it up. Have you any such call now?' The effect of this question was astonishing. In a moment the false lights had vanished, and God's star was again shining. I belonged to India again, and saw only one path of duty before me. The next morning it seemed as if the project of abandoning India was a thing of the distant past, and I could scarcely realize that I had only the day before been contemplating such a thing as retirement from the field."

# CHAPTER VII

## CALLED TO MOMENTOUS EXPERIENCES: EARLY BAPTISM OF LOW-CASTE PEOPLE

On his return to India he was at first appointed to a remote hill station where it seemed his range was sadly constricted. He applied himself with his accustomed diligence. At the end of two years there was a Christian community of twenty-six. "Up there in the mountains, Thoburn was not finding big returns for his labors; but he was brooding over big ideas and was to receive a very special fitting for the greatly enlarging plans."

It was high up in the mountains of Gurhway, where the missionary's heart almost failed him in the presence of the blindest and most ardent bands of idolatrous pilgrims, that God's Spirit specially visited him and he was strengthened to "undertake great things for God and to expect great things from God."

"At eleven o'clock I took my pocket Bible and retired to a little thicket near by for my Sabbath worship. I was the only worshiper. No other person within fifty miles adored the God to whom I that day bowed down. I sat on the soft grassy carpet, in the thick shade of an evergreen oak, and opening my Bible at random began to read the thirty-second chapter of Isaiah:

" 'Behold a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment, And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of waters in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. . . . Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. . . . Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters.'

"I had no definite expectation in my mind as I began to read this chapter. I was struggling against a feeling of extreme depression, and clinging to God's sure word of promise, but beyond this I was asking for

nothing and expecting nothing. I read on until I came to the words, 'Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high,' when it seemed as if a window of heaven had been opened above me. The Holy Spirit was poured upon me, and in a moment my sinking heart was filled with exultant hope and confidence. I read on until I came to the last verse, 'Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters,' when I saw, and I felt in my inmost soul, that in going forth to earth's waste places to sow I was the heir of a special promise and had the assurance of a special blessing.

"The experience of that memorable hour upon the lonely mountainside had to me all the force of a renewal of my commission from above. I little understood at the time what a permanent influence it was to have upon my subsequent life. It has not lingered like a bright spot in a receding past, but it has followed me wherever I have gone. Nearly eighteen years have passed since that day, but the influence of that manifestation of the Spirit to me is clearer and more powerful now than it was the day after the event. It lives in my heart like a vision of

God. It has all the power of a special revelation, and it seems as natural for me to plead its memory in prayer as to make mention of any of the written promises of the Word. God took me apart from the world, withdrew me into solitude with himself, that he might gird me anew with strength, and teach me in my chosen school a lesson of service never to be forgotten.

"On Friday evening we visited a village near by and talked to the inquirers living in it for some time. They had many excuses and many promises to make, but declined to take any decisive steps toward becoming Christians. After a long talk I told them I must leave, but before doing so asked them to kneel down and join with us in prayer. They all bowed down to the ground, while I prayed earnestly but with a heavy heart, for I fully expected them to leave and pass on to another place. When we arose I began to bid them farewell, but was suddenly interrupted by the head man of the company, who held out his hand and gave me his promise to accept baptism at once. Others followed, and the result was that we returned to the village the next evening, held a delight-

ful meeting, and at its close baptized eight men and three women. We were all happy, and yet I had serious misgivings about what we had done. These three women knew very little about Christ or Christianity. They differed from the other women around them chiefly in the fact that they were friendly to Christianity, while the others hated it, but very few missionaries would have pronounced them 'prepared for baptism.' The men were better informed, and some of them more in earnest, but I had grave misgivings even in the case of the best of them. I feared very much that I had acted too precipitately, but there had seemed no other way open to me. To have left the people till they were better prepared would have been to abandon them to the wiles of intriguing neighbors, who would almost certainly have entangled them in various snares, and thus made it nearly impossible to get them safely within the Christian fold. I hoped that it would turn out right, but feared it might be otherwise. Little did I dream, however, as I lay down to sleep that night of the lessons which were in store for me the next day.

"Notice had been circulated through all the villages around that the grand meeting on Sunday would be held at eleven o'clock, and I had looked forward to this hour with eager expectation. The day was bright and clear, and a sweet Sabbath calm rested upon the quiet grove where our little camp was pitched. Eleven o'clock came, but no audience appeared. This, however, did not much surprise us, as the simple villagers in India had no idea of time, and on such occasions may come an hour earlier or two hours later than the time appointed. We waited till the afternoon, and then gathered together a little company under a tree, where I preached, and afterward baptized two men, a woman, and a child. A few more stragglers dropped in, and at five o'clock I preached again and baptized two women and two children. Shortly after I had commenced preaching a large company arrived and took their places under the tree, where they listened very attentively. While I was baptizing the candidates all had risen to their feet and were watching the ceremony with the greatest interest, but I had not given them any special thought. At the close, to my utter astonish-

ment, eleven men stepped forward, and asked me to baptize them. They seemed serious and resolute, but I shrank from the idea of admitting so many uninstructed men to the holy rite of baptism. I accordingly told them that I was very glad to see them take this step, but that it would be necessary to give them preparatory instruction, and that in due time I would come again and baptize them. I saw their countenances fall in a moment, but did not divine the cause. Zahur-ul-Haqq, however, was master of the situation. To make the time, he started a hymn and then coming up to me, quietly said: 'If you put these men off in this way, they will not believe you. They will merely think that you have some secret reason for doubting them, and we shall see them no more. We must take them just as they come. Let them see that we trust them, and they will then trust us. If we do not accept them and baptize them, we cast them off altogether.'

"I was in a great strait, and for a minute or two I did not know what to do. But it would have been fatal for me to vacillate, and whatever was to be done must be done

at once, and done firmly and confidently. I lifted my heart to God in prayer, and my decision was made. The men were called forward, and I told them that by the advice of Zahur-ul-Haqq I had determined to baptize them first and instruct them afterward. They brightened up at once, and were baptized in the midst of a rejoicing little company of Christians.

"I left Bashta with no little misgiving. I had baptized twenty-seven adults and organized them into a church, appointed a pastor over them, and arranged for a careful supervision of the work; but when I thought of those raw converts my heart almost sank within me. How could they be expected to hold together, adopt Christian habits, and develop the life of a genuine Christian church? What would other missionaries think of this wholesale baptizing of ignorant men whom I had never seen before, and whose antecedents and even names I knew little or nothing of whatever? I was troubled not a little with questionings of this kind as I went on my way, but it was all for nothing. God was in the work. The little church founded in the wilderness and built out of

such rough material was not to fall into speedy decay. A year later I visited the place and held a meeting which was greatly blessed. Mr. Wheeler and Zahur-ul-Haqq were with me, and the latter received a rich anointing of the Spirit which added greatly to his efficiency in the work. On Sunday I baptized fifteen adults, and after receiving the communion, one hundred and two Christians sat down under the mango trees to a common meal. The church at Bashta now holds a notable place among the Christians of that region, and the survivors of that group who were first baptized consider it the chief honor of their lives that they belonged to the early pioneers of that day of small things."

A full transcription is made of this event, for it was one of those seemingly inconspicuous matters out of which a great movement was to grow, namely, the turning of masses of the low-caste people of India to Christianity.

This matter of mass baptisms is not here argued. In fact, the days of contention regarding it are practically past. All the missions are more or less engaged in the win-

ning of these masses. And, with adequate effort, there seems to be a general expectation that the entire out-caste and the lowest caste population of India may speedily be won to Christ in tens of millions.

This movement should, however, be accompanied with very strenuous effort for primary education among the children, the preparation of an indigenous ministry, and a wisely directed and persistently maintained movement toward self-support.

No church can be truly rooted in its native soil that is not able to read God's Word for itself, that is not increasingly led by its own sons and daughters, and that is not progressively freeing itself from financial dependence upon kindly people of alien lands. Self-instruction, self-support, self-propagation, all leading to self-government, must be gotten before the fast-growing Indian churches as its great "Quadri-Lateral."

Perhaps the earliest definite movement among these "untouchables" in the mass was that to which Missionary Thoburn was so strangely and divinely led. What was a notable and much-disputed experiment then is happily a commonplace experience now.

## CHAPTER VIII

## CALLED TO HELP CREATE A WOMAN'S MISSIONARY MOVEMENT

With the early beginnings of an infant Indian church all manner of difficulties multiplied. Particularly was the young missionary perplexed to know what to do with the women. These were even more ignorant than the men, more wedded to customs, and wholly unused to the presence of any men except those of their own immediate family. How was he to nurture and train the wives and mothers of the young and growing church?

Our missionary was very much in earnest and there was in him both a quick comprehension, a ready sympathy and yet a holy boldness that broke through unprofitable conventions. He found, even among the low-caste converts, that the women, if any of the elder males of the family were pres-

ent, would hide their faces and sit on the floor of the church in a huddling heap.

He appealed, he expostulated in vain. One day he felt that he could stand it no more:

"One day I was to preach in the village chapel, and before the service I exhorted the women to come in and sit down unveiled, and thus show, once for all, that they had thrown their foolish customs to the wind. The husbands had given their consent, but I was by no means assured that my exhortations would be heeded. The hour of service arrived, and the men filed into the little mud-walled chapel, and according to custom, took their seats on the floor on one side of the room. The women's side of the chapel was ominously vacant, and for a time I thought they must have conspired to stay away. But soon after the service had commenced a file of good sisters entered the chapel. The class leader's wife was at the head of the party, and she led the way to a corner on my left, where she busied herself for a minute or two in shuffling from side to side, but finally sat down with her face toward the corner, and with both her head and face carefully cov-

ered. I left the little stand, which served as a pulpit, went to the poor creature, laid a hand on each shoulder, and requested her to turn round. She was startled half out of her wits, but turned at once. The woman next in rank to her had elder-brothers-in-law present, but she bravely took her seat and uncovered her face, and then all the rest followed her example; and from that time the spell of this stupid custom was broken in that village and neighborhood. But there were other customs and superstitions which constantly hedged up our way in trying to introduce a better life among the women, and in our frequent efforts to effect reforms by our summary and sometimes unwise methods we were often baffled and defeated. At times I was at my wits' end, and felt almost ready to give up the struggle, but I did not know that God was even then beginning to show us a more excellent way."

The "more excellent way" was the thought that came to him, that woman's work can best be done by women. If he could get a woman free to devote her whole time to these raw, untaught women Christians and their heathen neighbors, it would greatly help.

He saw this and invited the best woman he knew in America to join him. She was his sister Isabella.

Years before this the conviction was settling upon the mind of Miss Thoburn that she was to "go far hence unto the Gentiles." But family matters had prevented. Besides, there was no church organization under which Miss Thoburn could go. Neither she nor her brother, however, was a person to be halted by difficulties. The brother's solution was that his sister should join "The Woman's Missionary Society of New York," a nondenominational Society. But the sister more penetratingly saw that the best work would be done in these early days by remaining under the direction of her own church. Nor was she kept waiting long, for others besides James Thoburn had seen the imperative necessity for a woman agency in the Indian field. The Butlers and the Parkers were home in 1869, and the elect ladies who bore these names, joined by five others, on a stormy day in May organized "The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society" in Tremont Street Church, Boston, Massachusetts.

# A WOMAN'S MOVEMENT

Boston has witnessed the birth of many great movements; but it is doubtful whether any farther reaching activity, fraught with inexpressible blessing to large bodies of needy people, was ever launched in the great capital of New England than this one.

The first missionaries of this new Society were Isabella Thoburn and Clara Swain, M.D., the latter the first woman missionary doctor ever sent out by any board, and the forerunner of a small army of workers, as helpful and blessed as ever have taken the messages of their Master to the suffering bodies and souls of the women of distant lands.

The missionary, with his readiness to learn new lessons, soon discovered that his sister was as real a missionary as he. With characteristic frankness he says:

"I was not quick, however, to learn that the ladies sent out to the work were missionaries, and that their work was quite as important as my own. A few days after my sister had commenced her work I found myself pressed for time, and asked her to copy a few letters for me. She did so cheerfully, and very soon I had occasion to repeat the

request. The copying was again done for me, but this time I was quietly reminded that a copyist would be a great assistance to her as to myself. The remark made me think, and I discovered that I had been putting a comparatively low estimate on all the work which 'the missionaries' were not doing. Woman's work was at a discount, and I had to reconsider the situation, and once for all accept the fact that a Christian woman sent into the field was a Christian missionary, and that her time was as precious, her work as important, and her rights as sacred as those of the more conventional missionaries of the other sex. The old-time notion that a woman in her best estate is only a helper, and should only be recognized as an assistant, is based on a very shallow fallacy. She is a helper in the married relation, but in God's wide vineyard there are many departments of labor in which she can successfully maintain the position of an independent worker.

"It has been said that a separate Missionary Society need not have been organized, but that its work could even now be as well done by the parent society. It is easy after an event to say that things might have been

done differently, but there is not the slightest reason to believe that any six leading men in the church would have been able to interpret the rising conviction of their Christian sisters, if the matter had been left to the men alone. As a matter of fact, bishops, secretaries, managers, editors, and leading men generally, had not only failed to comprehend the first indications of this conviction, but were perplexed, and, in many instances at least, confounded by the sudden uprising of the daughters of the church. It might do to say that these men should have had clearer vision, or that they should have been more quick to recognize the presence of a great moral movement around them; but to say that the direction of the movement itself should have been intrusted to men who did not appreciate its superlative worth, and some of whom did not hesitate to disparage it, is simply to say that the good work should have been suppressed at the outset.

"It was a mistake on the part of the Woman's Society to lay too much stress on the necessity of employing unmarried women in the mission field. The effect was to create the impression that married women could do

very little work as missionaries, and this very naturally had the effect of causing some women in the field to look askance at a society which seemed to depreciate the good work which many had been doing."

This sentiment finds wide confirmation among experienced missionaries. Thoburn found this new agency of the highest value and ventures this remark: "If the Woman's Missionary Society had done nothing else, or if its work in other lands were to perish from the earth, it would still be able to justify its existence by pointing to the striking advance which has been made in all that concerns woman's work in the North India Mission since the first agents of the society arrived in the field at the beginning of 1870. It is not so much that these ladies have done a good and great work, as that scores of Christian women have been enlisted in the Master's service, and the working capacity of the mission, as a whole, very nearly, if not altogether, doubled."

"In recent years I have noticed that there is not only a steady breaking down of the old prejudice of making women too prominent in the churches, but an increased will-

ingness to intrust them more and more with responsibilities which, a very few years ago, were given to men alone. Two young ladies have been sent by the Baptists of Australia to open a mission in a remote town in Bengal where no gentlemen are at hand to direct them, and in our own mission women have repeatedly been put in charge of stations where the entire responsibility devolved upon them, and they have acquitted themselves well. It is more than probable that this tendency to give the women more and more of the ordinary work found in a mission field will increase rather than diminish, and I can even go the length of adding that it is by no means improbable that Indian Phœbes will yet administer the ordinances of the church to the secluded women of the zenanas. I have baptized frightened village women under circumstances that made me wish that some Phœbe might be employed to take my place; and as for the inmates of the zenanas it is simply impossible for a man to gain access to them, and, even if he could be admitted to them, his services would be very unsastisfactory. A woman who has been carefully secluded all her days, and who has

never seen the faces of men who were not members of her family, is not merely embarrassed in the presence of a foreign missionary; she is absolutely frightened. There are those who believe that these timid, untaught creatures will be induced to come to the big church built for them, and stand up in the presence of a congregation, face to face with a missionary, and give intelligible answers to his questions, and then receive the baptism at his hands. All this may happen, but I do not expect to see it. I cannot believe that God will exact such an ordeal from such women; but rather, that, as in ancient times, we shall see the church in the house revived, and Christian women sent to minister to those who are inaccessible to the ordinary minister of the congregation. God would have mercy, and not sacrifice, and he will not compel these children of misfortune to suffer the torture of publicity for the mere sake of conforming to a custom which is more conventional than apostolic."

This may possibly shock the ecclesiastical beliefs of some reader; but there is inherent good sense in the contention.

## CHAPTER IX

## CALLED ACROSS THE GANGES

James Thoburn, in 1870, was the presiding elder of the Oudh District, with his residence in the capital, Lucknow, one of the greater cities of India.

Across the river Ganges, outside of Oudh, was the growing city of Cawnpore. An invitation to preach in Cawnpore brings us to the next marked forward movement to be led by Thoburn. Writing of it, he says:

"It so chanced one week that I had no appointment of any kind for the Sabbath, and the novel situation led me to consider carefully whether I was doing my whole duty. On Friday I had an errand at the railway station, and, while walking across the platform, a gentleman with a telegram in his hand stopped me and asked me if I would go to Cawnpore on Sunday, and preach to a small congregation. A preacher had disappointed him, and he had just been notified that he must look up some one else. I told

him that for once in my life I had an idle day ahead, and so agreed to go to Cawnpore, 'assuredly gathering' that God was calling me thither. Cawnpore was at that time an important city, and I had been regretting that it had not been included in our field and wondering if our way would open for us to gain an entrance into it. It is much larger now, and is not only the chief commercial city of North India, but destined to maintain its leading position in the future.

"I found a congregation of about fifty people worshiping in a hired storeroom and served two Sundays in the month by Presbyterian and Baptist missionaries from Allahabad. I was received most cordially, and was not only invited to return, but urged to plant a mission in the place; or, if not able to do this, at least to arrange for preachers to go over from Lucknow on the vacant Sundays. I was anxious to drive in our stakes at once, but several obstacles intervened. In the first place, the Board in New York had accepted at the outset a certain carefully defined field for our mission, the western boundary of which was the river Ganges, and had never formally relinquished the

right of fixing our boundaries. Then the General Conference had fixed the boundaries of our Annual Conference, and it was a question with some whether this did not confirm the original action of the Board. Still, further, there was an unwritten law of comity among the various missionary bodies in India, which made it improper to intrude into the field of a neighbor without his permission, and, as matters then stood, it was proper and fitting that we should seek counsel of some of our neighbors, especially of our American Presbyterian brethren, who occupied the region west of the Ganges, while we occupied the country eastward. Lastly, we had a well-understood agreement among ourselves that no new mission station should be added to our list, except by the consent of the Annual Conference, and this consent I could not obtain till the close of the year. While thus hedged about in so many directions I could not take any decisive action, and yet it seemed very clear to me that an open door like this ought not to be neglected. I, accordingly, ventured to become responsible for supplying the little congregations with preachers, who would be sent over from

Lucknow every alternate Sunday, and left the question of a permanent mission in the city to be settled in the future. On my return to Lucknow I invited our Wesleyan missionary brother to take a part in these services, which he did for a time, but subsequently both he and the Baptist brethren withdrew in our favor. In this way we were led to begin work on the western bank of the Ganges, and events soon proved that God's hand had guided us thither."

This was the first step in a long journey, and it was taken in the way that was afterward to plant the Methodist Mission all over India. The immediate object was to serve the needs of a handful of English people. From the first, Thoburn had seen the tremendous influence exercised by this small community, and had always eagerly sought to serve it. Less than a month ago he was asked: "What is the use of work among the English in India? Has it any real value?" His answer was: "The English work as I have known it in India I consider very valuable, in fact, a necessity. The whole intellectual life of India is slowly drifting, like ice from the arctic circle, toward the modern

English point of view. The very native pastors themselves show the influence of the English, of the English ideas, and in the schools the discussions among our young people, of which we have many instances, all show that the reading public of India is in touch with everything that bears the English brand. The English people in India are more directly connected with the phases of thought noticeable among all native people of the land. English Christians in India have a wider and better influence upon the public thought than is generally supposed, and therefore, the right religious shaping of their life is a great factor in influencing the surrounding Hindus."

## CHAPTER X

## LED TO SUMMON WILLIAM TAYLOR

In the further spread of Methodist Missions in India, there now appears on the scene a remarkable figure.

Romantic is the tale of how James Thoburn, the pathfinder and builder, summoned to India's help William Taylor, the greatest evangelist of his day—indeed, take him all in all, perhaps the outstanding evangelist of modern times.

Taylor was widely known under the name of "California Taylor," from his courageous and successful work among the saloons and gambling dens of San Francisco when the whole region was plunged into the wild life of an early gold-seekers' camp.

This tall, commanding figure, with a long beard and an apostolic air, had burst upon the California crowds and, by his ready wit, his sweet songs, and powerful exhortations, had arrested their attention and brought

many to a godly life, for it was clear from the first, and grew clearer all the way, through this glorious man's ministry, that his word was "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

Perhaps a larger proportion of those converted under Taylor's preaching became Christians of the kind that "endure hardness" than under any similar ministry. There was a commanding influence in the man's own simplicity of life, his democratic spirit, his unassuming ways, his rugged courage, his patient endurance of positive privation. The contagion of this great, lofty soul brought scores of lesser souls to altitudes undreamed of.

The writer would crave the reader's pardon if even in this brief sketch, he turns aside from Thoburn to offer a tribute of grateful praise to this holy and effective man. He brought salvation to us and our households, and the fragrance of his memory, after forty years, is as ointment poured forth. Wherever they may be scattered, in America or amid the seven seas (for his evangelism was widespread), there are still hundreds who arise to call him blessed. And

thousands have gathered about him in that fair land and before that Radiant Presence, whose love he carried with him the round world over. This was the man whose presence in India Thoburn coveted. Where the world-wanderer might be, he did not know. But he knew that probably in some remote section of the far-flung British empire he would likely be engaged spreading his Redeemer's kingdom.

Mr. Thoburn wrote Mr. Taylor an earnest invitation to come to north India and offered him every facility in conveying his messages to the thronging people of the land. The letter was addressed to the "Wesleyan Headquarters in London."

It was nearly a year before Taylor received it. To him it was of the Lord, for he, too, was a man who believed in the direct leading of the Holy Spirit. Is there ever a man really effective in the spiritual realm who does not thus believe?

He came. Thoburn writes:

"He came up from Australia, and stopped for a time in Ceylon, intending to go from thence to the Wesleyan missionaries in the Madras Presidency; but, not finding an open

door there at that time, he concluded to come on to us at Lucknow. We waited his coming with eager expectation, and spread his fame among the people far and wide. He arrived on Friday, November 25, 1870, and began his work on the following Sunday. He had wonderfully changed since I had seen him, both in manner and appearance. He was now a veritable patriarch, with erect and imposing mien, long, white beard, a piercing but kindly eye, and a reserve which often impressed strangers more powerfully than any words could have done. His pulpit style had completely changed—so much so, indeed, that there was absolutely nothing about him which reminded me of the William Taylor whom I had known a dozen years before. He seemed indifferent to the surrounding circumstances, but from the moment of his arrival began to give us lessons in his theory of 'soul-saving.' At family prayer he read a few verses and expounded them to us, and then, kneeling down, continued the exposition in the form of prayer. He insisted much on our maintaining an attitude of faith. Walking with him at a late hour one night through a palace garden, I

chanced to say, 'If we should have a revival here'—in a moment my arm was in the grip of a giant.'

" 'If? My brother, there is no "if" about it. We are going to have a revival. That is settled. The agreement is with the Lord Almighty, and it cannot fail.'

"As he thus talked to me he held me at arm's length, while my arm felt as if screwed up in an iron vise.

"On Sunday evening the chapel was crowded to its utmost capacity, and the entrance of the strange preacher was awaited with great curiosity. He went inside the communion railing, but paid no attention to the humble little pulpit. After singing and prayer he took the big Bible and stepping to one side to be near the lamp, proceeded to read and expound the second chapter of Acts. He did this in a manner of seeming indifference, and apparently took no note of time. After singing a second hymn he announced his text, and began to preach to a congregation which was expecting the benediction.

"I have heard him preach, perhaps fifty times since, but have seldom ever heard him

make an effort which seemed less suited to the occasion than his first sermon in India. Altogether, the service was a disappointment to us, and we were not surprised to see but a small congregation the next evening. This, however, seemed to arouse rather than depress the preacher, and the sermon was searching and incisive. On Tuesday evening sinners were invited forward for prayers, and seven persons responded. They were not deeply convicted, and only one of the seven remained permanently with us; but this meeting was an era in the history of our work in India."

And now began a ministry, often severely criticized, always startling, always overturning traditions—sometimes perhaps needlessly and not to profit, but take it all in all, a ministry of four years which has left indelible impress and greatly quickened the Christian movement of the land.

So just, so discriminating, so comprehensive is Bishop Thoburn's own writing on the subject, it is quoted in full:

"Mr. Taylor had been preaching in Lucknow for a few days. On Wednesday morning the first invitation was given to natives.

The congregation was composed almost exclusively of native Christians, but very few of them were really converted. I acted as interpreter, and near the close of the sermon I had an opportunity of perceiving the effects of that extraordinary power which at times attends Dr. Taylor's preaching. He was describing, in simple language, the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit, when suddenly a thrill seemed to go forth with his words. I felt it as I tried to interpret, and I saw the tears start into the eyes of the natives before us. Eleven men came forward for prayers, ten of whom almost immediately professed to find peace in believing. Most of them were deeply moved, and there was every reason to believe that the work in their hearts was of the most genuine character. We were all surprised, however, at the simplicity and quietness of the meetings. We had fully expected that a long and vigorous prayer meeting would follow each call for seekers, but this seldom occurred. The inquirers were instructed, sometimes in a body, and sometimes one by one, and their attention kept closely to two points: submitting to God and receiving Jesus Christ. I

had seen Dr. Taylor in the midst of stormy prayer meetings in former years, and asked him why he had changed his methods. 'I never liked those meetings,' he said, 'but I found it best to endure them. When allowed my own way, I choose my own course.' "

A deep and powerful work of revival set in at Lucknow, but it was confined to the Europeans and native Christians. Perhaps the work of preparation for the understanding of the gospel was not yet sufficiently advanced among others.

"We went through our mission field, preached everywhere to the native Christians, stirred up a deep interest, and did much good, but at the end of his visit, we found ourselves just where we had been before; face to face with millions of people who seemed absolutely impervious to the truth, and who thus far had never been moved by the gospel, except in detached groups and in obscure places.

"The work among the native Christians was not deep except at two or three points. . . .

"Had Dr. Taylor's mission terminated here and he had left India to return no more,

he would still have done a great and important work. He had taught valuable lessons, had elevated the spiritual tone of our little Conference, and had kindled a flame which has never since gone out. It is due to him to say that he gave an impetus to our work which it has never lost, and that he committed us to advanced movements which had he not led the way we might have shrunk from for years. If we were disappointed in not seeing him hew a way for us through the dense masses of the natives, we were nevertheless permitted to see him beckon us forward into other fields, and point out to us other and greater responsibilities than we had dared to anticipate.

"That he did a great and important service to the cause of Christianity in the empire I do not for one moment doubt. He is the 'poor wise man' who by his wisdom did a great good for the 'little city' of Indian missions, and now no man remembers him for it. He was the pioneer revivalist of the empire, and he gave an impetus to lay preaching which is felt in all its force to the present day. He brought the power of the gospel to bear upon low depths of vice, and he

inspired the most active Christians of the land with a loftier courage than they had known before.

"The doctrines which he preached, and most of the peculiarities which he introduced, are now popularized all over India, and many of those who still condemn his procedure are entering heartily into the work which he made possible for them. He did not sufficiently appreciate the enormous difficulties which beset the work among the natives, he was too sanguine in reference to the success of his own men and his own methods, and too quick to assume that he had discovered the path which would quickly lead us all out of the dense jungle of difficulties in which we had so long been struggling, but after discounting his services with all just freedom, the fact remains that one of the greatest benefactors Indian Christianity has ever had, and one of the truest men who ever tried to plan and labor for the Indian people, is William Taylor."

## CHAPTER XI

## PREPARED AND CALLED TO CALCUTTA

Mr. Taylor went from city to city in India, and how during these visitations small groups of believers were gathered into the "class meetings" and then into the churches; how from these churches have ultimately come whole Conferences of Methodism and the quickened life of the surrounding missionaries, cannot be told.

It was at Calcutta, the capital of the Indian empire, Taylor met with the greatest opposition and indifference. Yet, in spite of all, he dug foundations deep and wide. And then, deeply moved from above, Taylor, the courageous innovator, boldly summoned Thoburn to leave his official position and his Conference to continue in the metropolitan city the work well begun, but much in need of furthering.

But, as ever with those who seek the leading of God's Spirit, Thoburn was to learn some valuable lessons the better to prepare

him for larger spheres than he had yet found. He learned lessons of faith in the power of Christ's gospel to save his hearers, even while he was preaching; and of faith in the people whom he served to minister to his temporal necessities and so release him and much of his work from necessary dependence upon a Mission Board; but, above all, he learned to organize bands of scattered believers into churches, self-supporting and largely self-directing, while yet in happy affiliation with the denomination to which he belonged. God was preparing his man for nation-wide work and even for the regions beyond.

As in every other notable step taken by Dr. Thoburn, his entry upon the work in Calcutta was governed partly by his inward impressions and partly by his Conference and the trend of outer events. In the fall of 1873 an elect lady present at the yearly gathering in Lucknow, urged his coming to Calcutta. He was much impressed. These are his words:

"Mrs. May, of Calcutta, almost immediately began to urge me to go to Calcutta and make that great city my future home. She assured me that it had come upon her al-

most as if by an inspiration that God had work for me there, but her repeated and earnest assurances that I would find an open door and an eager people awaiting me there seemed so improbable that I had often to laugh at what seemed her misplaced enthusiasm. 'There will not be a place in the city that will hold the congregation,' she would say, 'and you will find more than you can possibly do.' It was easy enough to believe that abundant work might be found in Calcutta, but eager hearers and crowded congregations seemed only to be possibilities of a very distant future.

"Two months after the subject had been pressed upon my attention I received a telegram from Bishop W. L. Harris, then in Ceylon, asking me to meet him in Calcutta, where he was to arrive about the middle of December. Father Taylor had commenced his work in that city nearly a year previously, and had worked bravely in the face of constant discouragements. He called the city 'the Paris of the East,' and was accustomed to say in those days that of all the places he had ever visited, Calcutta was the hardest and least inviting as a field of evangelistic

labor. He had not, however, worked in vain. A church had been organized, a temporary place of worship erected on a rented site, and a deeper impression had been made upon the city than, perhaps, he himself suspected, or others were prepared to admit. He now wished to leave the work in other hands. He was an evangelist, and distinctly avowed his conviction that it was no part of his mission to do the work of a pastor, but, rather, to dig and plant, and leave others to prune and water.

"Bishop Harris spent some days in the city and talked very freely to me about the work, but did not broach the subject of my transfer for some time. At last, however, he intimated to me that he should be glad to transfer me to Calcutta if the way would open, and meanwhile Father Taylor had intimated that he was impressed that I should take the work out of his hands; and he added that a singular dream had made it seem probable to him that all the difficulties which had baffled him so long would crumble to the earth as if in a moment when I came, and that I would have an easy and joyous victory. Our Conference met in January,

in Lucknow, and on taking counsel of the brethren I found that, without a single exception, they all approved of my going. It was, accordingly, arranged that I should spend three of the hot months at Naini Tal, but meantime go at once to Calcutta. I was, accordingly, transfered to the 'Bombay and Bengal Mission,' which was at that time formally organized by Bishop Harris, and my appointment read out for Calcutta."

Summoned by Taylor, appointed by Bishop Harris, Thoburn went to India's capital city.

The work in Calcutta reads like a spiritual romance, as, indeed, it was. Where Spirit-filled men go, spiritual romances always spring up as in the legend the lilies sprang up wherever Jesus trod. He found in the city a small group of believing men and women already organized into a church. A small church was being built.

"The new chapel was intended to seat a congregation of four hundred persons, and we were all very glad and thankful when on the evening of its dedication it was filled in every part. The next Sunday evening it was crowded, and we had to bring in chairs

from neighboring houses. On the third Sunday evening I went early so as to attend a meeting for Bengalis which had been appointed for half-past four. While at this meeting I saw some Europeans come in, and supposing they had made a mistake, I went to them and explained that the English service would not begin for another hour.

" 'We knew the time,' was the reply, 'but we have come early so as to be sure of getting a seat.'

"For the first time it dawned upon my dull mind that our crowded congregation was to be permanent, and I remembered with a feeling of astonishment the prophecy of the good lady who had first invited me to come to Calcutta. It went on thus, night after night, until six hundred hearers were packed into a room which comfortably held only four hundred, and in the most sweltering weather many of these people would sit patiently for an hour or more, waiting for the service to begin. When it did not rain, seventy-five seats were placed outside the rear windows, and in addition to these the doors and windows were always thronged with people standing. This crowded attendance would have been unsat-

isfactory enough if there had been no work of salvation attending it, but this was not wanting. At the dedicatory service two rose to ask for the prayers of the congregation, and this was the beginning of a work which went steadily forward with increasing power until, before the close of that year, three hundred persons had been converted to God. Many of these were members of other churches, and did not connect themselves with us; but many others were drawn in from the outside world, and took their places permanently with us. The genuineness of the work was attested by the remarkable hold which it gained upon the more abandoned and godless classes. An inmate of a house of refuge was taken to one of the meetings by a Christian lady, and on her way home was asked how she liked it.

"'It's the strangest church I ever saw,' was her reply. 'It seemed to me that all the bad people in Calcutta were there.'

"It was the New Testament ministry of Christ repeating itself again in our day. The Friend of sinners was there, and the very classes who are supposed to have no religious interest of any kind flocked around him, as

in olden time. A year later I found, by actual count, that twenty-five per cent of all the members thus gathered in had, before their conversion, been intemperate persons.

"Throughout this year we had conversions, not only on every Sunday evening, but at almost every meeting which we held, and the work of revival, which was then commenced, has never wholly ceased. Every Sunday service during the past ten years has been conducted as a revival service; and if it so happens that two or three Sundays pass in succession without anyone being converted, the fact occasions surprise, and is accepted as a cause for heart-searching and humiliation. The work of conversion was very simple, but it was also very genuine. Throughout this year I met with many instances of persons finding peace with God while listening to the preaching. One Sunday evening I went into the pulpit while suffering from fever and preached with no little difficulty. I hardly knew what I was saying, and at the close was about to dismiss the congregation without a prayer meeting, when it occurred to me that it might be well to pursue the usual course, if for nothing

else but that the people might know that we always wished to see them turn to God. I, accordingly, called on awakened sinners to come forward for prayers, and, to my extreme surprise, sixteen persons promptly rose and walked forward. I talked with these persons one by one, and found that seven of them had found peace in believing while listening to my blundering attempt to preach. I was astonished beyond measure, and humbled in the dust, as I perceived how very little the success of my work depended upon the quality of my sermons."

So great was the pressure for added room, that it soon became necessary to erect a larger building. Architects and builders were interviewed.

"My instructions were very brief. 'I care very little for the outside of the building,' I said, 'but insist on a good audience room. I am like the Irishman, who told how a cannon was made by taking a big hole and pouring melted brass around it. I give you a big hole, one hundred feet long, sixty wide, and thirty high, and wish you to show how it can be covered with bricks and mortar.' My friend accepted the commission, and in two

days not only gave me a good plan, but his firm offered to have the building ready for me on my return from America, at the close of the year, and nobly did they fulfill their promise."

The building was paid for by the sacrificing efforts of this congregation of poor people, who were supporting their pastors and also projecting all manner of programs of what would now be called "social service" among the sailors who crowded the port, the soldiers from the garrison and among the flotsam and jetsam that abound in all the coast cities of Asia; where, alas! the moral wreckage of Christian Europe and America meets the product of the unspeakable vices of paganism.

Dr. Thoburn's ministry in Calcutta was not only rich in immediate results, it awakened expectations among timid European Christian circles, and emboldened them to believe in the dynamic power of the gospel —first to redeem their own fallen fellow religionists; and, besides, so many educated Indians were converted as to prove the value of work among the English, and in the English tongue to effectively reach numbers of Eng-

lish-speaking Indians. But, above all, the metropolitan character of his work in Calcutta gave Dr. Thoburn both prestige and personal fitting for those wider movements which he was "called" to undertake.

In closing this brief account of the really notable work done in Calcutta, something of its method and quality may be learned from the following excerpt:

"While preaching a sudden impulse moved me to say: 'There is a person somewhere in this audience who has come in here with a broken heart. I know not who it is, but I have a message for that person. I am speaking for Him who came into our world to bind up the broken-hearted. He is here now, and he is here to help you. He gives me a special message for you, and has come to save you, to take all the bitterness out of your heart and out of your life, and make your life sweet and bright and full of hope and joy.' These remarks were thrown in parenthesis, I hardly know why, and then I went on with the sermon as I had planned it. At the close I asked all those whose hearts God had touched and who wished us to pray for them to rise, and I fully expected to see among

those who responded a poor broken-hearted woman, but not a woman moved. A dozen or more men promptly rose to their feet, but no woman stirred. I was greatly surprised and perplexed, and for some time I waited and urged any timid souls who might be present to be courageous and ask for the help they needed, but still no woman responded. At length I proceeded with the prayer meeting, and while some one led I turned to a man who had occupied a seat within two paces of me, and in that conspicuous place had risen in response to my invitation. As I knelt beside him he said: 'I am afraid you can do nothing for me. Mine is a very difficult case. I am the person you spoke of who has come in here with a broken heart. I am a stranger here. I was coming up the street, and was surprised to see the theater open on Sunday night, and some one told me there was to be preaching to-night. I turned in, and every seat was full, and the ushers brought me up here. I was startled when you said that some one had come in with a broken heart. I knew I was the man, but I fear that I am beyond hope. The story of my life is a story of utter misery.'

"I saw this poor man the next day, and hoped that he had been helped and healed; but he left the city and I saw him no more. This was the kind of work God gave me to do in those hallowed days. Those were days of power, days of hope, days of assured victory. Jesus Christ is forever the same. Would to God that the Christians of this world could awake to a sense of the immediate personal presence of Jesus Christ in their midst, as the 'very same Jesus' who walked in Galilee and taught in Judæa, who hallowed the synagogue and glorified the temple by his personal presence. It is a sad truth that the modern church is too good, or at least too respectable, to attract the world's outcasts, or even the broken-hearted who represent respectable society. A really earnest soul in some way makes any average group of people uncomfortable by his presence. He finds the door open, but the atmosphere within is apt to be chill and cheerless. The presence of the living Christ means life, peace, hope, joy and immortality. How slow we poor mortals are to enter into the rich possessions which we inherit in our Elder Brother's name!"

## CHAPTER XII

## CALLED TO FARTHER INDIA

The Methodists often tell each other that they are too widespread in their missionary undertakings. Solemnly they resolve in their chief councils that they must concentrate more on narrower areas; but steadily, in one way or another, they seem forced to "enlarge their borders." It would seem to be in their blood. And, however one may agree in the general advice not to undertake what cannot be well done, it is a more difficult matter to refuse to believe, when all the facts are before one, that many of these adventures of extension are not manifestly born of the acknowledged leadership of the Holy Spirit.

In considering this matter there cannot but be noted a sharp distinction between new missions projected by those on the field and by those whose only connection with such new openings is to see them made, with scant knowledge of existing conditions

and with very partial provision for their financing for a brief term, then going off and leaving them to cheerfully enter upon other duties. The brunt of all succeeding difficulties falls upon the men, usually themselves inexperienced, who have been called into the work and upon a protesting Mission Board already staggering under the weight of existing obligations.

There is surely grave question to be raised regarding such careless and largely self-pleasing adventures.

But when the extension is under the compulsion of recognized and deeply felt need, and when he who is pressed upon from around and above will himself largely bear the new burdens created, one is apt to judge more patiently and come to more favorable conclusion. The opening of a new area of missionary effort may be from thoughtlessness for those who must later bear the load, and from even unconsciously lesser motives of self-advertisement. On the other hand, to refuse to go forward when God beckons to personal endurance for others, may be to sin against Him.

Whatever may have been said in the past

regarding Bishop Thoburn's ceaseless quest for new missionary adventures, it can never be said that he began anything whose early burdens he did not largely bear. Nor has time failed to attest the soundness of his judgment as well as the daring of his spirit. He has always seen in continents—but his continents have always proved sure footing for his own and succeeding footsteps. The writer does not know a single instance in which Bishop Thoburn's foresight has been at fault nor his forecasts failed to be confirmed by the outcomes, whether in the purchase of vast properties without a cent in hand to pay for them, or the thrusting forth of new enterprises into vast territories in the regions beyond.

Wherever matters have been well handled by the immediate successors, the result has shown that the man's felt dependence upon the inner suggestions of the Holy Spirit, and perhaps a native gift of insight, has carried him to a degree of successful initiative rarely given to men. Among these great adventures of his later years are three that carried him far beyond the bounds of India proper and made him God's man for com-

pleting the links whereby Methodism with its virility and spontaneity of life girdles the globe. The earliest of these was his missionary trip to Rangoon, Burmah. This peninsula lies to the east of India proper, across the Bay of Bengal. It is the seat of a distinct type of Buddhism, the religion professed for the most part by practically all the Burmese who inhabit the lowlands. These lowlands, drained by the great Irawadi River and its tributaries, are among the richest alluvial plains of Asia. The great harvests of rice, which are reaped as often as thrice a year, feed not only the ten millions of Burmah, but are largely exported to the less favored lands of the East. In these later years, since Burmah has become entirely a British province, large numbers of Hindus from India, together with a considerable sprinkling of Chinese from South China, are to be found in Rangoon, the capital, and are pushing farther and farther up the river into the interior. In the hills farther from the coast are to be found many pre-Burman tribes, among whom are the Karens and Shans. The former of these have been largely evangelized by the Amer-

ican Baptists. As is usual in all British possessions in the Far East, there are sprinkled among these Asiatic millions a considerable number of English and part-English folk holding the form of Christianity, but for the most part strangers to its reality and power. This class has always appealed greatly to Dr. Thoburn, and since William Taylor's arrival in India he had caught even more clearly the vision of possibilities that lay in this Anglo-Indian community for the evangelization of the Asiatic millions that were around them. In response to many invitations Dr. Thoburn finally consented to visit Rangoon. The man's quiet courage and his complete confidence in the outcomes are most naïvely shown in his own statement which follows. Nor should the writer fail to call the attention of the reader to its compendious brevity and force. Dr. Thoburn is one of those rarest mortals who has done great things and has had the art of telling them greatly. Anticipating the outcomes of a visit to Burmah, he had written to William Taylor to send him a man for the church he would found on this visit. Questions of ordinary missionary policy, Board provi-

sions, and the ceaseless questions of finance that always give pause to such movements had never too much place in Thoburn's plans, and even less in Taylor's, and so the doctor writes:

"The project was brought before the Rock River Conference by Father Taylor, and the members of that body quickly pledged money enough to send a man to Rangoon, and about the first of June I was greatly surprised to receive a telegram announcing the arrival of the Rev. R. E. Carter and Mrs. Carter in Rangoon. I had hoped to be there to receive them, but they had 'prevented' me, as King James's translators would have said, and so I had to make all haste to go down and get the strangers settled in their new home. Mr. Goodwin was to go with me, and I asked him to be good enough to procure tickets for our passage by the next steamer.

" 'Where shall I get the money?' he asked.

" 'It was one of Napoleon's maxims,' I replied, 'that war must support itself. We must depend on making conquests in Rangoon and getting the sinews of war from our converts.'

"The agents of the steamer gave us return tickets for a nominal sum, and, after a stormy passage of four days, we arrived at Rangoon on Wednesday, May 11th. A young man who had been converted at one of our Dasahra meetings in Lucknow met us on the dock, and took us to his home. Mr. Carter meanwhile had been hospitably received by Baptist friends, and had preached several times in a hired hall. The American Baptists maintain a very strong missionary force in Rangoon, but at the time they did very little for the English-speaking people. They had a small chapel in which they preached on Sunday evenings and held a prayer meeting on Wednesday evenings; but they had not been able to give attention to pastoral work, and gave us a cordial reception when we came among them with the avowed intention of making work among the English-speaking classes our chief objective point. Their chapel, which held about two hundred persons, was placed at our disposal, and there we opened our commission, and most of our services during this visit were held in it.

"Going to Burmah from India was like

going from home to a foreign country. We were in a strange land and among strange people. The number of European and Anglo-Burman inhabitants in Rangoon was at that time estimated at three thousand. Very few of these had ever seen a revival, or knew anything about revival methods, and we were to begin our work on fallow ground. I found that a much larger proportion of the Europeans could speak the vernacular of the province than in Calcutta, and this afforded a hope that we might more easily and quickly reach the natives than we had been able to do in the latter city. We had no caste rules nor caste prejudices to encounter, and altogether the way seemed to lie wide open before us.

"The next week evening after our arrival we began our meetings in the Baptist chapel. The small room was not full, and it was at once apparent that a revival meeting had as yet very little power to draw an audience in Rangoon. I announced meetings for both morning and evening, and the next morning about forty persons were present. After a quiet talk I called for seekers, and eight persons at once responded. A deep feeling was

manifest, and I felt assured that a blessed work of salvation had commenced. At each succeeding meeting the interest seemed to increase, and awakenings and conversions took place daily. We secured the town hall for Sunday evening, put up posters on all the streets, hired and borrowed seats from far and near, and at the appointed hour an immense crowd filled the place. I had a rare opportunity to deliver the message of reconciliation, and God stood by me and helped me. The immediate fruit was very apparent, and a new impetus was given to the meetings in the chapel, and our hands and hearts were burdened with work. At the two meetings on Tuesday we had thirty-eight persons publicly professed to have found salvation during the previous meetings, and two days later the number of persons who had publicly come forward for prayers had risen to eighty. The amount of work in the shape of visiting from house to house, and patient instruction and prayer with inquirers one by one, which the presence of eighty awakened sinners involved, will be readily understood by everyone who has had experience in winning souls. In Rangoon this kind

of work was new, and we had very few who could help in such an emergency. Mr. Goodwin and myself were soon worn down with the incessant work into which God had thrust us. Our strength, however, was as our day, and we were able to hold up under the heavy strain to the last.

"On the second Sunday evening it seemed as if almost the whole city had come together in the town hall. God helped me again to declare his word, and when at the close of the sermon I called on awakened persons who wished to be prayed for to rise, some thirty persons stood up in the presence of the congregation. It was a solemn hour. I have seldom at any time seen a meeting at which divine power was so manifestly present. Again a fresh stimulus seemed to be given to the meetings in the chapel, and by the end of our second week in the city the total numbers of seekers enrolled by us had risen to one hundred and thirty.

"As my stay in Rangoon was to be short, we had not neglected for a day the great work of foundation-laying which we had in view. Our first class meeting or fellowship meeting, as we say in India, was held on the

fourth day after our arrival. Our church was formally organized on the second Sunday, with twenty-nine members and probationers, but the number rose to fifty during the next three days. A Quarterly Conference was duly organized, three men licensed to exhort, a pastor's fund secured, and thus a thoroughly organized and fully equipped church was established in Rangoon within two weeks of our arrival. Nor was this all. We had applied to the authorities for the free gift of a site for a new church, and had received assurance which virtually made us owners of a fine lot at the junction of two leading streets, and we had also collected about one third of the cost of a new church. Mr. Carter unfortunately was prostrated with fever most of the time of my visit, and as he was still very feeble, I left Mr. Goodwin to help him for another fortnight, while I returned to Calcutta. As I came away I looked back upon the brief days of my hurried visit to this most interesting city with simple amazement. We had gone forth without a rupee and had set up our banner in a strange land and among a strange people, trusting solely to the unchanging and

unfailing promises, and mountains had melted before us. The banner was left waving, and is waving still. God had been in the work, and the gates of hell were not to prevail against the humble band which had been gathered in his name. Christ had gained another victory. Satan had been again defeated."

Thus in a few rapid sentences does he narrate one of the epics of modern missions.

The genuineness of his call to Rangoon and the soundness of the foundations he laid may be judged by the later history of the Burmah mission. It has not grown to marked size, but it has demonstrated marked efficiency, and is full of hope and well-devised plans for a considerable contribution to the evangelization of this most interesting land. In all these labors for the Kingdom Dr. Thoburn was enabled to secure the largest results by his happy faculty of putting others to work in whatever way might be possible to them. He has had so much confidence in the ability of every man to do something worth while that he has always been ready to trust untried men with considerable tasks. He thus constantly inspired men to believe

in their power to do things. It is surprising how often the things were done. And many a man to-day intrusted with largest matters remembers Thoburn as the man who started him on his career of usefulness. He never spared himself. He exacted full measure of responsible work from others.

He says:

"But if a patient submission to all that is manifestly one's own work is a clear duty to the missionary, it is no less a duty to lay all possible burdens upon other shoulders just as soon as God provides shoulders for the purpose. Division of labor is a law of Christ's kingdom, and it is more than a blunder for Christian leaders to neglect to utilize all the varieties of labor which God puts within their reach. Every Christian has a special adaptation to some form of Christian work, and it is doing him a personal wrong to withhold from him the task which God would have him perform. On the mission field the temptation, or at least the tendency, to shrink from intrusting native churches with responsibility is very strong, and hence it happens that some missionaries are breaking down under some burdens for

which there are ready and willing shoulders all around them. It is easy, of course, to go too fast, and lay upon a feeble native church responsibilities which it is not able to carry; but the danger of mistakes is almost wholly in the other direction. It is the natural method, the universal law of the kingdom of God on earth, that in every land, among every people, Christians should be taught to manage their own affairs and carry their own burdens."

Particularly was he happy in calling out latent indigenous powers for service in the churches he planted. The reason for this success lay largely in his inner belief that God can find and develop his agents everywhere. That evil saying "These people cannot be trusted to do things right," whatever the difficult task might be, was never accepted by Thoburn as the truth of the case. He grasped better than most of us the divine philosophy which must underlie all missionary training of the church in the field when he writes:

"The Holy Spirit wonderfully distributes all needed gifts for useful service in the church, and if a wise discrimination is used

in the employment of the workers, it will generally be found that with the development of a Christian congregation workers of all grades, and prepared for all kinds of service, come to the front when needed. We must not despise the service because it is lowly. Too many are ready to take it for granted that God only calls men to what they regard as sacred or spiritual service, and hence they are startled to hear it suggested that a devoted woman has a call to minister to the sick, although quite willing to admit that her brother or husband may have been called to preach the Word. It will be a happy day for the Christian Church when every form of Christian labor is dignified by being recognized as a part of God's service and when all grades and classes of workers are recognized as equally honorable in God's sight, and alike heirs to a blessed reward. The seven deacons were not inferior to the twelve apostles whose burdens they, in part, assumed; and one of them speedily rose to great eminence in the church, and but for his untimely death would probably have eclipsed the fame of the most illustrious twelve. As in the case of Stephen, so with

many a modern worker has it happened that a humble form of service is made a stepping-stone to greater responsibilities. We never know when initiating a new disciple into some lowly form of service for the Master what the outcome may be. 'To him that hath shall be given.' To the faithful worker will be given higher service, and the success in one trust becomes the earnest of still greater success in other spheres."

## CHAPTER XIII

## CALLED TO A GREAT ADVENTURE

THE story about to be told covers what Dr. Thoburn is accustomed to term his greatest missionary adventure—his call to Singapore and entry upon a mission to the Malay world.

Between China on the north and east and India to the north and west projects the Malay Peninsula like a forefinger pointing toward the south pole. At the tip of this finger is the island and city of Singapore, guarding the Straits which separate it from Sumatra and give entrance to the Malay archipelago—stretching from Sumatra up to the Philippines and including such beautiful rich and romantic lands as the islands of Java, Borneo, Celebes, etc. These islands with the Peninsula are included under the general term Malaysia and are chiefly inhabited by the Malays. In recent years, however, their exceeding richness both in

valuable vegetable products, such as pepper, tea, rubber, and gambier, and their large production of tin ore, has brought to them several millions of Chinese from South China and Indians from South India and Ceylon.

The Malay Peninsula and some of the neighboring islands are British possessions. A large part of the archipelago, including Sumatra, Java, and parts of Borneo, is under the Dutch flag and forms the most valuable possessions of the kingdom of Holland. Many of the old-time Malay chiefs still hold nominal rule over parts of the archipelago, but the real control of affairs is in the hands of these two European powers.

Singapore may justly be termed the strategic center and the emporium of the archipelago. This city of over three hundred thousand enterprising people has four to five thousand people of English descent, such as Dr. Thoburn constantly used as the base of approach to the surrounding Asiatics. This community's religious needs were but scantily met. Dr. Thoburn was perhaps the best-known missionary in India. Certainly among the English-speaking people it was so. It was inevitable that he

should come to desire and to receive invitations to visit Singapore and there also to preach the gospel.

And so it was. Particularly did urgent request come from a godly Wesleyan, Charles Phillips, who in absence of any Methodist church was an elder in the Presbyterian kirk. Being an earnest man, he had built a chapel at his own expense, in which he himself preached to the humbler Europeans and served their families in several ways. Mr. Phillips wrote often, urging Dr. Thoburn's presence. Thoburn had the matter in mind and began to feel the inner pressure—which with him always preceded the making of any definite program of action. He was not yet clear.

It was in the fall of 1883 that Bishop John F. Hurst was in India to hold the Conferences. In strange ways he came to India, also impressed that a mission should be opened in Singapore, to connect our growing missions in India and China. One of his first inquiries when he met Thoburn in India was, "What do you think of our opening work in Singapore?" His startled hearer answered that he had long had the matter in

mind, and that of late it had begun to press upon him heavily, but there had been no available man to put into the work if a mission were opened. Thoburn has always been very impatient of drilling oil wells without being prepared to supply tankage at once for any strike of oil. But when men like Dr. Thoburn get such a matter seriously before them, difficulties begin to disappear, particularly when a somewhat obstinate Methodist bishop sets himself to help push things through.

The result was that after much canvass of several names, Dr. Thoburn and J. E. Robinson named an unknown stranger who with his wife was on his way to India, after several years of absence in American colleges, to serve as a missionary. The Bishop had never heard the man's name before, and was inclined to object. But on Robinson saying, with emphasis, "Bishop, if you do not appoint W. F. Oldham and wife to Singapore, I don't want to have anything to do with the case," the Bishop yielded, and in the appointments of the South India Conference for 1884 there appears the line, "Singapore—W. F. Oldham."

When, a few days later, the Oldhams arrived in Bombay, they were told of their appointment and that there was no financial provision for their support. They quietly accepted the appointment of lawful authority, for had they not been trained under Taylor and Thoburn to look into the face of difficulties without shrinking if only they might believe God and the church were bidding them go forward?

But Dr. Thoburn was not the man to bid another go and not lead the way himself. If a mission was to be planted in a strange land among strange people without any previous financial assurance, he would himself lead the way and show how it might be done. And so it was that in a few weeks there started from Calcutta a small group of Methodist missionaries led by Dr. Thoburn and including the pastor designated for Singapore.

On their way from Calcutta lay Rangoon, Burmah. Reaching here, they found they had no funds to proceed to Singapore, four days' steamer journey farther south. Dr. Thoburn's resources, however, did not fail. He talked with God and then called together

the Methodist people whom he himself had gathered on a previous visit. He told them of his plight and immediately a good lady arose and said: "We must send these messengers of the gospel on to their appointed field." She walked up to the Doctor and laid a fifty-rupee note before him. Others followed; it was like a Negro camp meeting for a while. The giving was "hilarious." The proceeds more than paid for the four tickets to Singapore.

Next morning on board Dr. Thoburn quietly said, "The God who calls will open the way for his obedient servants."

On reaching Singapore this strange episode occurred: There had been no opportunity to notify Mr. Phillips of the Bishop's coming, nor did he know anything of the others of the party. But when the steamer reached the dock he was there. He immediately walked up to Dr. Thoburn, saluting him by name, and then, turning to the rest of us, he said, "Well, you have brought these friends with you to help."

Dr. Thoburn was perplexed and said, "How did you happen to be here, and how did you know us?"

Mr. Phillips replied: "I saw you last night in my sleep. I saw this steamer coming into dock, and on it were you and your party, just these who are with you. I was therefore on the dock waiting to welcome you. Now, come along; you are all four to stay with me."

We were deeply impressed, and the writer of these lines bears witness after thirty-two years to the feeling of devout gratitude mingled with something like awe that filled his mind. To Dr. Thoburn the incident seemed impressive, but not surprising. Some men are in such close touch with God that he can afford to be more familiar with them in the manifestations of his gracious care. There are several such incidents in the lives of both Taylor and Thoburn. Let your very practical souls that fear religious mystics and enthusiasts explain as they may, only do not forget the outcomes of such men's labors in the midst of this workaday world.

### Singapore

Immediately after landing, the town hall was secured and such advertisement as was possible was put out, calling the people to-

gether to hear Dr. Thoburn, who was at that time the best-known missionary in Southern Asia. On the first evening a remarkable company gathered to hear the preacher.

Singapore is the meeting place of the nations. Here representatives of practically all the various Asiatic peoples may be seen mingling with many of the races of Europe. The town hall gathering included many different kinds of white men and women with a sprinkling of Tamils from India and Ceylon, a few Chinese from the coast of China, and one inquisitive English-speaking Malay. Mrs. Thoburn led the singing. Young Oldham distributed the singing books, and Dr. Thoburn took charge of the service. The text was announced, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." With simplicity and directness the speaker stated that the audience would reassemble from evening to evening, that their numbers would increase, that not by might of human eloquence, nor by power of human persuasion, but by the direct pressure of the divine upon their minds and hearts, many of these before him would be convicted of their sins and some of them would turn to God and

find newness of life. The service was so exceedingly simple and the effect was so profound that all the anticipations of the speaker were more than fulfilled on the nights that followed. Dr. Thoburn himself often referred to the ten days at Singapore as being marked by a very distinct sense of the immediate presence of God. At the close of this brief mission those who had openly accepted the gospel were called together and a church was born.

It will interest the reader to know how this Methodist Church, the first in southeastern Asia, was organized. When Dr. Thoburn and Mr. Oldham went over the list of those who had become Methodists, they found there but three—two men and a woman—that could be mustered into office to begin with. It was necessary that a Quarterly Conference be organized. The appointed evening came. The lady was scared and therefore absented herself. One man was ill. The only person present besides the self-appointed presiding elder and the venturesomely appointed pastor was John Polglase. Dr. Thoburn proceeded to organize him. He was elected to all the offices to which

laymen were eligible in the church. Then finally he was made the estimating committee on the preacher's salary and was asked what Mr. and Mrs. Oldham could be expected to live on, being informed at the same time that he was the Board of Stewards, and would be expected to go out and raise the amount. The critical moment of the Quarterly Conference had arrived. But John Polglase was an unusual man and he did not back out. He finally smilingly looked at young Oldham and then at the Doctor and said: "I think they can live on seventy dollars a month, and as to the raising of it, all I can do is to try, and if Oldham can stand the arrangement, of course I can."

Thus was founded the first Methodist Church in Malaysia. The next day the Thoburn party embarked for Calcutta, leaving Oldham behind to carry forward the enterprise. This he did as best he could. He soon had the privilege of meeting some of the progressive members of a Chinese debating society. As a result a meeting of the society was arranged at which Mr. Oldham delivered a lecture on astronomy—a suitable subject, he thought, for the audience of

celestials. The lecture seemed to give pleasure, and the young missionary was asked to become a personal tutor of a prominent Chinese gentleman, a member of this society.

As a result of this introduction to the Chinese life of the city a school was opened for the teaching of English to the sons of Chinese merchants. A building was erected which was paid for by the Chinese themselves. A Chinese teacher was hired to teach that language, and Mr. Oldham himself became a teacher of English. The school prospered from the day it was opened. Soon there were two hundred boys and young men in attendance. A boarding department was started and the young missionary within a year returned to his Chinese patrons, calling upon them for further accommodation to make room for the increasing body of students. These men trusted him, with the result that still ampler accommodation was afforded, the Chinese paying the bills. That school has now been in existence for thirty years. Eighteen hundred young people are in its enrollment, and out of it have been born other schools, ranging from far Borneo to the north of the Malay Peninsula, so that

there are now in the schools of the mission in the neighborhood of ten thousand boys and girls receiving a Christian education. The whole educational movement is profoundly affecting the life of these lands, and the very largest religious results must ultimately be the outcome. The last word reaching us from this school tells of a ten days' meeting held with the students. Ninety young men presented themselves for Christian baptism and are now under close personal instruction.

For the encouragement of other missionary teachers who may be spending long, weary hours in what may seem the drudgery of the day-schoolroom it may be remembered that all the criticism of the earlier days, when visiting missionaries and even wandering episcopal stars ventured the opinion that the messengers of the gospel would better be engaged in preaching the New Testament rather than in thumbing schoolbooks, has entirely passed away. It is now well known that the schools have softened prejudice and have won their way to the innermost confidence of the most influential people, and that there are many openly professed Christians who

were brought to Christ by their schoolteachers who were completely inaccessible to the preaching of the missionary. The factitious distinction between teaching the gospel and preaching it finds no ground in the New Testament, where Jesus commands his disciples to "preach the gospel" and "to teach them all things." The Spirit-filled preacher is a great agent for the spread of the gospel, but the Spirit-filled teacher has also his secure and worthy place in bringing in the Kingdom. Let each in honor prefer the other and supplement him.

The Malaysia Mission, now an Annual Conference out of which was born the Philippine Annual Conference, is using all the possible methods that modern missions have devised for the evangelization and uplifting of that vast territory where over sixty millions of people are scattered over the islands, a million square miles in area. Most notable has been the welcome given by the scattered Chinese to the teaching missionary who has also been the preaching missionary, and while the statistical results are not very large because of the mobile character of the population, the mission is slowly striking its roots

all through this vast archipelago, and wonderful days are surely ahead. Bishop Thoburn, the pioneer of this mission, who took Oldham there, has never ceased to declare that this visit to Singapore was the crowning adventure of his notable missionary career.

## CHAPTER XIV

## CALLED TO THE MISSIONARY BISHOPRIC

Dr. Thoburn's widening labors did not prevent his giving the closest attention to the strengthening and confirming of the large work already in hand in India. It will be admitted by all students of missions that Methodism has shown a fine genius not only for the planting of missions, but for developing them when planted. The whole Methodist system is pliable and not rigid, and consists of checks and counter checks whereby the various parts balance each other and permit of sufficient minor change held within fairly fixed bounds to allow the progress without danger of wild plunging. Men under such a system can often introduce very marked changes in methods of procedure and administration. But they can do this only when they have earned the confidence and when the proposed changes have in measure been demonstrated. Nor can any greater tribute be made to any Methodist leader than

to have him successfully inaugurate such changes through the General Conference, the governing body of the church. The safe inference is that the man who has persuaded strong men by the weight of his personality and the urgency of his reasoning, and a multitude of lesser men by the evident sanity of his proposals, is by this fact acclaimed a constructive builder as well as a man of power. We say these things because some of his contemporaries have expressed the belief that Dr. Thoburn was a great missionary, and a great religious pioneer, but that he was not to be trusted as a builder of policies and creator of improved plans and methods of administration. Lesser minds even when found in high places find it difficult to believe that men can combine high qualities of diverse kinds. If a man be a great orator, he cannot be a good financier, Gladstone notwithstanding. If he be a daring and adventurous spirit, with little respect for moribund traditions, how can he also be an ecclesiastical builder?

Something of a new teaching in this regard may perhaps be seen in the Methodist Church; but if it be so, it is one of the results

of the presence of men like Thoburn. Dr. Thoburn went to the General Conference of 1888 held in New York city as a representative of the Bengal Conference, though he really represented all India. The matter that India desired most of that General Conference was a better method of episcopal supervision. It may be necessary for our younger readers to learn what led to this and what has come of it.

Our foreign missions were then supervised by general superintendents who visited them once a year in succession. This visiting superintendent was usually chosen by seniority in office rather than by any fitness for a difficult and delicate piece of work in far-off lands. The general superintendents were men of wide domestic experience and were often of marked intellectual power. But as often they lacked any special knowledge of the differing traditions and temperament, the historical setting or current trends of the civilizations among which the infant churches were placed.

In addition to this there were the lure of travel, the distraction of sight-seeing, and often the claims upon their attention of their

families who accompanied them. All these reasons combined to make the coming of the bishop a matter of anxious speculation to the missionary leaders on the field. Methodism clothes its bishops with much power. Only the closest knowledge of conditions among which they work, added to ready insight, freedom from undue leaning to personal opinion, and a very large admixture of humble reliance upon the light and leading of the Holy Spirit enable a Methodist bishop to serve satisfactorily in any land. Absence of any of these requirements makes successful administration impossible. It is not surprising that as the India mission grew in strength it was less inclined to endure a system under which a stranger came to the Conferences each year without close knowledge but with power to rearrange the work and alter the appointments of the missionaries. Having fixed the "Appointments," the bishop was gone, to be seen on that soil no more forever. All protests and discussions in the home papers only drew forth the retort that India was threatening the keystone of the ecclesiastical structure—the general superintendency.

To a mind like Thoburn's this objection had little weight. The existing plan did not work. There was neither full intelligence nor continuity in administration. There must be some better way. With Africa it was even worse. The supposed threat of the African climate against life had made the visitation of Africa much less popular than of India and China and Japan. There were few, if any, visits at all. When any inspection was undertaken, the episcopal visitor closely hugged the shore and at night slept on board shipboard. It was rugged William Taylor coming from the interior who described the bishop as "overseeing the work of God in Africa through a telescope from the deck of a steamer." Africa had broken away in 1884 from this method of "absent treatment" by the resurrection of the "missionary episcopacy." India Methodism came to the General Conference of 1888 insisting that "intelligent, continuous supervision" must be given her expanding work, and Thoburn, trusted leader at home and abroad, was charged with securing the legislation. He had spoken on the subject often, and had written on it most luminously in the Meth-

odist Review and in the church press generally. Of course he was accused of personal ambition. This made no impression.

Truth to tell, he knew matters could be adjusted vastly better than they were under the existing system, and he and the whole church knew that if any man were elected to administer India, there was only one man to be named, and that was James M. Thoburn. Dr. A. B. Leonard, missionary secretary, threw the whole force of his personality on the side of the innovation, as did several others who believed in Thoburn. As a result the missionary episcopacy was extended to India and Dr. Thoburn was elected the first "Missionary Bishop of Southern Asia," for he had himself already carried Indian Methodism far beyond the bounds of India proper. A general superintendent was to visit India once a quadrennium as a coordinate bishop. But Thoburn was for the next dozen years the pilot and captain of Methodism from the Himalaya Mountains to the borders of Australia.

How splendid the progress of these quadrenniums, how masterly the programs laid down, the impetus given, the results

achieved, may be read by the student who inquires into the history of what Bishop Foss has called "our most successful mission." The writer would not withhold any least atom of recognition of the worth and energy of the other great men and women associated with Thoburn, but they would be among the first to say the largest place must be given to the clear-sighted, fearless, enterprising man in whom God had combined the flaming prophet, the brilliant leader, and the master builder.

The further result of this movement was to cause the General Conference to break away from the tradition that all general superintendents must live in the United States. China needed intelligence and continuity of administration as much as did India. The bishops were therefore directed to place one of their number there for terms of service, gradually increasing in length until we now have two of the most conspicuously successful general superintendents making the administration of China Methodism their lifework. The plan has been extended to Europe and South America and Japan. But do not Kansas and Oregon and Maine

also need "continuous intelligent" administration? They do and are now getting it under a plan of which the missionary episcopacy was undoubtedly the forerunner. All the fears of the traditionalists have proven unfounded, though their clamors have not wholly ceased, and the church at large is receiving more quickening leadership from its chief pastors than ever before in its history. And this may perhaps be counted among the by-products of Dr. Thoburn's prophetic vision and practical capacity to concrete his visions in useful legislation and plans.

A few years after the Malaysia Mission was founded, Dr. Thoburn, a born expansionist, stood on the threshold of the mission house at Singapore and looking eastward, said, "I hope some day to see the walls battered down and the gospel preached in the Philippines." At that time the Philippines were under Spanish sovereignty and permission could not be had for either the circulation or the preaching of the Bible. An effort was made by the British and Foreign Bible Society to send two colporteurs to Manila with a supply of New Testaments. They were seized and thrown into prison and their

books were burned on the Plaza, and one of the colporteurs, a Spanish ex-priest, died. His companion, a young Methodist local preacher, Mr. Castelles, escaped with his life, and returning to Singapore, declared it was impossible to circulate the Scriptures in the Philippines. Bishop Thoburn knew of this event and it stirred him to even stronger desire to preach in the Philippines.

## CHAPTER XV

## CALLED TO THE FARTHEST EAST

We need not go into the matter of what led the United States in 1898 to interfere with the Spanish domination of Cuba and Porto Rico. A very unexpected result was the bringing of the Philippines under the Stars and Stripes.

While all America was intently watching the West India Islands in the Atlantic the surprisingly unexpected word reached New York that Admiral Dewey had entered Manila bay, had sunk the Spanish fleet and commenced the occupation of the island of Luzon. Soon afterward a treaty was arranged, and Spain retired, and the U. S. A. became the custodian of over eight millions —Filipinos and Moros and wild hill tribes. Our people were embarked upon the strange and romantic adventure of being trustees of a people in far-off Asia, who were to be trained into fitness for self-government by

being made intelligently familiar with the institutions of freedom and by being inducted into such intelligence and moral self-control and economic independence as would warrant their being wholly intrusted with the direction of their own affairs. The strange new task was welcomed with a sort of religious consecration. The people at large felt that God was calling the nation to a higher missionary errand. At the time Bishop Thoburn was in London. He writes:

"The third of May was an eventful day, not only to me in London, but to a great multitude of Americans scattered abroad over the world. I wrote in my notebook: 'Manila is in American hands! God be praised. Even since I began our Malaysïa work those islands had been in my mind, and I had believed that God would ere many years open them to the world and to the gospel, but little did I dream that the work would be done by Americans!'

"It became evident very quickly that the sympathies of the people in London were with the Americans in the war with Spain, and although some of the papers seemed disposed to criticize the course pursued by the

President, it was abundantly manifest that the people at large had taken a correct view of the principles involved and the actual position of the parties. At that time the position of England on the Pacific was not too well assured, and in the case of serious trouble Japan would have been the only strong power on which to depend. The Americans at Manila would not be allies, and yet it seemed to be instinctively felt that their very presence in that great sea had completely changed the situation. I could not move about in London without becoming impressed with the very manifest good feeling that prevailed among the people generally toward the United States and the American people."

He then returned to India and says:

"We arrived back in Bombay on the 12th of August, and at once found ample work and care awaiting us, with calls from almost every part of India requesting personal help in some form, and at the earliest possible day. I at once began work by calling the Finance Committee of the Bombay Conference together, and trying to arrange our estimates for the next year, but after two days

of perplexing and wearisome work I wrote in my diary, 'Beating the air is the hardest kind of work.' About the same time Dr. Leonard wrote suggesting that I visit the Philippines, but as active fighting was going on there the time seemed premature. But I was giving very close attention to the situation in those distant islands, and had no thought of neglecting what I clearly recognized as one of the most remarkable tokens of God's providential government in modern times. For a long time I had been praying that God would give us an entrance to those islands, and our missionaries in Singapore and Penang had been not only praying, but a local preacher had actually gone to Manila, but only to be arrested and put in prison."

Soon afterward the Bishop proceeded to Manila alone, calling at Singapore. The Filipinos, mistaking the errand which brought the Americans to them, supposed that they had merely come to supplant the Spaniards as their masters. They therefore rallied under General Aguinaldo, and attacked the Americans in and around Manila. Bishop Thoburn arrived when Aguinaldo's forces were lying just outside the city, and

his rifle bullets pattered on the roofs of the houses. But he was undismayed. God's missionary servants are not easily turned aside from the errands of duty. And, as is ever the way, there were small tokens of the divine favor which greatly cheered the missionary adventurer. He came to the only available hotel, and was told there was no vacant room. He put down his bag and sat outside the door, asking the Master to direct his steps.

He was rapidly approached by a military officer who said, "Do you want a room?

"Yes, but there is none vacant."

"Well, I am just leaving. Bring your bag in here and take possession. That's always nine points of the law, you know."

The advice was taken and the Bishop was safely lodged. He immediately began a missionary reconnoissance of the situation. He visited the soldiers in the trenches outside of the city itself. So little did the Spaniards as well as the Filipinos understand the spirit and temper of the American people that he was offered one of the handsomest Roman Catholic churches for a trifling sum. But he was not seeking bargains from frightened and mistaken people, and did not even make

inquiries whether the offer was being made by those who had the right to sell. Indeed, church buildings as such had never had any large place in Bishop Thoburn's thinking. He always sought to develop life and working energy rather than plant and machinery, although he never hesitated to make extensive purchase when the promotion of life needed the outer surroundings. He soon found an empty theater named for the Filipino patriot Rizal, and immediately hired it for a Sunday service. He had already found an old time American local preacher from India, Brother Prautch, who had gathered around him a small group of inquiring Filipinos. With his help the theater meeting was advertised and an interpreter was found. When Sunday morning came, once more this servant of God stood in a strange land which had long been an object of his earnest desire, to preach the gospel which he had proved over the wide lands he had traveled. Some who were at this first Methodist service in the farthest East tell of its simplicity and deep solemnity. The prayers and the sermon were punctuated at intervals by the zip and splash of rifle bullets falling on the

zinc roof. Among the notable results of the meeting was the finding of Nicholas Zamora, of whom we will hear again later. It is to be noted that the collection taken in that theater paid all the expenses and encouraged the Bishop to go forward with his plans.

In the midst of the agitations of a city under fire and the even greater complications of the misunderstandings between the Americans and the Filipinos there was born one of the great missions of the church under the fostering care of this apostolic man. And what a mission it was, and how wonderful in its present work and influence! Surely, the Spirit that whispered in Thoburn's ear many years beforehand that the walls around the Philippines would fall, and the people be given free access to the gospel was not absent in the events that led to America's assuming the guardianship of these fair islands. The presence of republican institutions, the blowing of the free winds of American liberty, the large extension of the use of the English language, the closer acquaintance with the inner life and movement of a Protestant people, have all helped to make the Philippine Mission the most fruitful and

promising of all the missions of the church in Roman Catholic lands. In a decade and a half a membership of fifty thousand is reported. And this very imperfectly conveys the very great influence exercised upon all life, public and domestic, by the evangelical missions of the American church.

They not only have gathered one hundred thousand people into actual membership, but have powerfully aided in liberalizing thought, in informing aspirations for liberty with intelligence, in promoting thrift—in a word, in helping to lay in a people's character and intelligence the firmest foundations for both self-government and progress. Among the first of these evangelical forces in bringing a nation into the currents of modern life is that Methodist mission, whose genesis under Bishop Thoburn's leadership we have all too briefly told. The early days of the mission were full of difficulty and disappointment. Bishop Thoburn writes two years after his first visit:

"We got away from Singapore on Wednesday, February 28, 1900, and arrived in Manila on March 6, and I took a room in the leading hotel for the sake of the seclu-

sion and quiet which I hoped to find there. When I found time to look into the condition of our work I found what at that time I called a 'tangled situation.' I had been peculiarly unsuccessful in finding a suitable man for the post of superintendent of our Philippine work, and on one occasion at least public attention had been called to my seeming neglect. Only those who have had the experience in work of this kind could appreciate the difficulties which I encountered in trying to fill this vacant post."

"But in the end God so led us that the work was fully organized, and our mission became conspicuous both for its effective organization and remarkable success. The work, however, had by no means been neglected. Several army chaplains had rendered assistance, Mr. Prautch, who at that time was working in regular connection with us, was very active, and Mr. Goodrich, the agent of the Bible Society, was a minister of our church. The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was represented by four ladies, but they had not been able to secure a comfortable place of living, and were much cramped in their work. The outlook was not

very encouraging, but when measured by the average missionary standard it was by no means hopeless. Religious services had been held regularly, many persons were manifesting an encouraging interest in the work, and the whole community was evidently more or less awake. The Presbyterian missionaries were working successfully near by, and I heard reports of other parties who were expecting to enter the field. Our services were conducted in a hired house, which for want of a better name was called the 'Institute.' It served its temporary purpose fairly well, and 'our own hired house' was somewhat after the memorable precedent mentioned in the New Testament.

"In the evening of our first day on shore I wrote: 'We had a prolonged meeting of our little band of workers this evening. We formally organized a Quarterly Conference, licensed Nicholas Zamora as a local preacher, and after a very long discussion decided to ordain him by getting him admitted on trial in a home Conference, and elected to deacon's orders by cable.' I, accordingly, sent the following message through Dr. Leonard to Bishop Vincent, who I knew was at that

date presiding at the regular session of the South Kansas Conference: 'Admit Nicholas Zamora to Conference probation. Elect to deacon's orders. Transfer to Malaysia Mission Conference. Answer.'

"In the evening of the next day I received the following reply: 'Zamora admitted, elected, transferred.' When this message was made known there was no small stir in our little circle. Time was precious, and I immediately announced that an ordination service would take place at nine o'clock of Saturday, March 10th. A small company gathered, including a dozen or more Filipino women, and I ordained the young man a deacon. The service was impressive, and a deep feeling was manifest in the little company. The father of the candidate was present and was deeply moved. It was very unfortunate that a little misunderstanding existed in relation to the church relation to the candidate. The father with his family had joined the Presbyterian mission, but when the Methodists arrived and were in great need of a Spanish-speaking preacher, he proposed that his son Nicholas should join the Methodists for the sake of helping the

great work, while he himself with the rest of his family should remain with the Presbyterians. As the matter was put before me the whole transaction seemed to be a beautiful illustration of high-grade missionary comity, and not for a moment did a misgiving arise in my mind concerning the rightfulness of the transaction.

"This young man, Nicholas Zamora, proved to be a man of eloquence and power. He very rapidly rose in distinction, and proved not only to have the gift of eloquence, but of leadership also. He attracted attention almost from the first, and beyond all question he was a power for good, not only in Manila but wherever the Filipino people were stirring. A great future lay before him, but his position was a difficult one, and his peril very great. Not many men of the same age in America would have been unmoved by the influences which he encountered. To become an independent leader of a great local church, to dispose of his income according to his own judgment, to construct the framework of his church organization, to be the spokesman of a great community were things which conspired to lead him into

a course which must in the end have proved too much for one so young and inexperienced."

The next quotations refer to the unhappy fact that Zamora, moved by a certain racial impatience for complete independence and by a desire to have himself elected the general superintendent of the Filipino Methodist Church, foolishly led a secession which in a few years melted into nothingness:

"The reader may justly think that I should assume my share of the blame for what has since occurred. But at that time and under the circumstances, it seemed absolutely necessary to take a bold forward step, and it really was necessary. Something had to be done. Thousands and tens of thousands clamored for a free gospel, the sacraments of the church, and the solemnization of Christian marriage. Thousands of unmarried parents were forced to bring up their children as so many heathen because wicked priests would not solemnize a legal marriage without payment of a fee beyond the means of the parties. I am sorry, very sorry, for poor Zamora, but I do not give him up."

## CALLED TO FARTHEST EAST

Once more the Bishop was in the Philippines. The jubilee visitation of Southern Asia in 1906 took Secretary Leonard and several other American visitors to India. Of these only the missionary secretary and Bishop Thoburn reached Manila. The Bishop was no longer in the fullness of his strength. But the wide outlook, his undying enthusiasm, his confirmed belief in the advancing conquests of the gospel all served to cheer the young church. The Conference sermon, preached to the assembled Americans and Filipinos, was the last the writer has heard from the Bishop. It had all the old-time power and was notable for breadth of vision, the deep human sympathy, and the unfaltering trust in God that it expressed. In eight short years a Conference had grown up, and it was given God's honored servant to see the fruit of his own earlier planting. Soon after the Conference he embarked for America. And so there passed from the coasts of Asia a great personality who in the years to come will be numbered with Carey and Martyn and Morrison and Judson and Duff, as among the greatest of the princely men of the Kingdom.

## CHAPTER XVI

## CALLED TO A QUIET HOUR

TIME is a furnace we fan with our sighs and feed with all our treasures. But there are some things even time has no power to touch. In nothing is the difference more marked than in the way old age affects men. To the mere selfish man of the world it usually brings loss of interest in any but the narrowest round of personal matters, often attended by peevishness and strange suspicions and jealousies. But to one who has spent his life in the service of men, finding his inspiration in the felt presence of God, old age has no terrors. It is the "quiet hour" of evening to which he is invited. The heat of the day is over, the burdens laid down; time is now for trooping memories of earth and glad premonitions of heaven, and in the midst of it all the dearly felt Presence.

Not long after Bishop Thoburn's return from his last world tour, the General Conference assembled in Baltimore in May, 1908. The Bishop was still in much vigor

of body, but at seventy-three there can scarcely be expected the physical strength to administer a wide and difficult field. He therefore addressed the Conference, asking for the relation of a retired missionary bishop. It was one of the high moments of the Conference when the beloved missionary appeared and read his simple valedictory statement presenting his request for retirement as follows:

"Fifty years ago, while a youth, preaching on a country circuit in Ohio, I accepted a call from God and his church to missionary work in India. The following year I sailed for my field and have since been associated with our missionaries in that country. For this privilege I cannot be sufficiently thankful, under God, to our church and her noble Missionary Society.

"God has spared my life and given me splendid opportunities for achieving success. To him supremely and to you, dear fathers and brethren, as representing his church, I beg to express my unspeakable thanks. But with the lapse of years and the increase of life's burdens, I have become convinced that the time has come for me to lay

down my official responsibility and only attempt such tasks as changed conditions may permit. I therefore respectfully request that you will be good enough to grant me the relation of a retired missionary bishop under such conditions as may commend themselves to your judgment. Again thanking you and in your name thanking the church for the splendid opportunity you have given me, I remain, dear fathers and brethren, your obedient and grateful servant,

"James M. Thoburn."

Concerning this request The Christian Advocate said:

"A small man, whose dark skin was in contrast with his snowy beard, asked permission to say a few words. A hush fell upon all as he read the brief and simple outline of his life and asked to be allowed to retire from active service as a missionary bishop. It was James M. Thoburn, general of the forces of Southern Asia, the Christ-led leader of the Methodist advance, the man who laid the plans of campaign and has lived to hear the first shouts of the returning victors."

Acting upon the request, the Committee

on Episcopacy presented the following recommendation:

"*Whereas,* We have learned with profound regret that our esteemed and beloved Missionary Bishop, James M. Thoburn, has felt compelled to ask for superannuation; and

"*Whereas,* His long years of service to the church have been given in a spirit of devotion and sacrifice rarely equaled; therefore, be it

"*Resolved,* That we recommend that this request be granted, and we hereby record our high appreciation of his life of magnificent missionary achievement and apostolic activity, and devoutly pray that the blessings of God may be increasingly upon him and that his last years may be a triumphant coronation of his beneficent life."

Dr. James M. Buckley, chairman of the Committee on Episcopacy, spoke as follows:

"Mr. President, the committee feels keenly its inability to express its own feeling, and the feeling of the General Conference, and the feeling of the whole church, and, further, the feeling of the whole missionary and Protestant world. [Applause.] There has never been a man like unto him in

the Methodist Episcopal Church, for the purpose to which he devoted his life. [Applause.] With simplicity mingled with sagacity; with straightforward English, and yet at times, under inspiration reaching the spirit and the words of the ancient prophets, but more frequently of the Apostle John, he has persuaded us when he could not convince, and convinced us when he could not persuade. Consequently he has had his way, which he believed was God's way.

"Bishop Thoburn [Bishop Thoburn rises], we have fought together in the Missionary Boards for a generation almost. We did not always see eye to eye, but we always saw heart to heart. I am glad and sorry to be here. Sorry because you have felt compelled to retire; glad that this body and our church love you, and, furthermore, that they will venerate you to the last hour of your life, and think of you to the last hour of their lives. [Applause.] May the Lord bless you abundantly, and may you see yet greater things in India and greater things in every mission, and may your last hours be as sweet as those who sleep after a tired, but a successful day. [Applause.]"

In response Bishop Thoburn said:

"Dear brethren, I am overwhelmed. I have encountered many difficulties that I did not anticipate, and, with God's blessing, I think sometimes I have achieved greater success than I dreamed of in my youth; but I never anticipated such a scene as that through which I am now passing. My limited vocabulary will not enable me to express my feelings even if my feelings permitted me to use the vocabulary.

"As I leave you, I simply ask that you will kindly change the word 'superannuate' to 'retire.' [Applause.] I have not quit work. I expect to see some great victories, although not in the land of my adoption, but in the land of my birth, and possibly elsewhere. And my parting word to you is that you will carry with you always the conviction that when Jesus Christ said that he would 'be with you always' he meant what he said. He has been with me through these years. I have been enabled to say a great many thousand times that I think I know him. I am sure he knows me. He knows you and loves you, and has pledged his word that he will be with you. And when we get

that universal conviction through our church we will more rapidly help to transform this world than the most sanguine among us has ever dreamed. Now, may God bless you forevermore. Thanks for your kindness to me. [Applause.]"

Dr. A. B. Leonard, secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, closed this incident with a tribute expressing the high regard in which Bishop Thoburn is held by those among whom he has spent the long years of active service. Dr. Leonard said:

"Mr. Chairman, I think I ought to bring at this moment to this General Conference a tribute that would be voiced by our church in all Southern Asia.

"It was my privilege a year ago to be in the company of Bishop Thoburn at each of the nine Conferences of Southern Asia. And I want to say to this General Conference that the devotion and reverence felt and manifested toward Bishop Thoburn in all that country was most beautiful. The natives and missionaries rallied around him, and they regard him as having been their leader through providence for these many years. When the Bengal Conference was in session

in Calcutta the trustees of the church which Bishop Thoburn founded, the building of which he erected, that will accommodate fifteen hundred people, was crowded two Sunday nights to hear his sermons; and the trustees, during the session by unanimous vote, changed the name of that church, and in place of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Calcutta, it is to be known hereafter as the 'James M. Thoburn Memorial Church' [Applause]."

## CHAPTER XVII

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Retiring from active life, Bishop Thoburn decided to spend his closing days in Meadville, Pennsylvania, where he had been a happy college student in his youth. The citizens of that beautiful city welcomed his coming with the gift of a home. And there, respected and beloved by all, his spirit as cheery as ever, surrounded by his children and grandchildren, the Bishop spends the "quiet hour" which is given him before he shall be summoned to walk through the gates of day.

In this closing chapter the writer would emphasize what has been dwelt upon all through these brief sketches: "A good man's steps are ordered of the Lord." The Divine Immanence may be constantly attested, if we will welcome it, by such illumination of our understanding and such inner persuasions of our mind as will leave us without reasonable doubt that we are being divinely

guided along the way. His strong persuasion of this truth is the key to the remarkable career of that most remarkable man James Mills Thoburn, missionary, statesman, and bishop.

It will interest the reader to learn Bishop Thoburn's mature opinion on several matters. The writer therefore takes the liberty of reproducing the Bishop's answers to a series of written questions.

It must be confessed that the Bishop is not easily interviewed, for he has a certain impatience with any questions that he thinks to be merely academic. His replies, therefore, are often brief, but they give us nevertheless the gist of the thinking of a man who has thought more deeply than most:

"Will you mind telling us how it comes to pass that the Methodists have succeeded so widely in India?"

"I do not think our success has been so great. I can only recognize our success in a relative sense. I do not think we have really had very extraordinary success; relatively we may have had."

"What has prevented our obtaining that larger success that is in your mind?"

"The absence of capable agents on the field."

"Do you mean among the missionaries imported, or the native agents on the ground?"

"I mean, in the first place, men and women from the homeland who could enter into the same kind of work we were doing. A favorite theory of mine, in almost every kind of human effort, is that the most important agency in a given situation is leadership. It is needed everywhere. I have often been led to say that in the selection of bishops for the church leadership should be the first qualification. I have seen not a few bishops myself who could not lead at all in a new movement. We all know how the leadership of Christ has been placed in the New Testament before the eyes of the church. 'He shall gently lead.' "

"What would you mark as the qualities that you would seek for in these leaders? What qualities are we to try to find in the missionary?"

"In the first place, he should have a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ as the living Saviour of men, 'That they might know thee, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' That

knowledge, I take it, should be personal. It goes without saying that a missionary should have, in a personal and practical sense of the word, knowledge of human nature and character. In a practical sense of the word he should be unselfish, always on the alert to help any fellow being who needs assistance. A missionary must have no indolent habits. Indolence is an infirmity which is infectious. Missionaries must have capacity for spiritual friendship. I have frequently seen in the foreign land an illustration of personal affection which reminds me of that which exists among relatives. Personally, I have learned to understand this by the experiences through which I have passed, and have often met persons in different parts of the world who introduced themselves to me as related to missionaries who knew me. I cannot call it a special kind of social Masonry, but it is, rather, something peculiar to the whole missionary community, throughout the world."

"Please tell us as you look forward, what your expectation is as to the progress of Christianity."

"I have given much thought to this general subject. It seems to me both logical

and scriptural to regard the general Christianity of the world as intended from the beginning to be a common movement which either ignores national boundary lines, or at least insists on giving them a subordinate place. For many generations there will be separations caused by language. But I cannot believe that a separation based on mere differences of opinion within narrow lines can be permanent. Men may not be able, a thousand years hence, to see all manner of subjects alike, but, on the other hand, it will be impossible for them a thousand years hence to hold aloof from one another merely because they do not have a common vision. In spite of the European war, I still believe that God has a plan in reserve, to so direct all manner of public movements and measures in Europe that these suffering nations shall yet be able to live in a state of peace, and not only peace, but practically loving good will."

"I am thinking, Bishop, more of the Moslem and non-Christian world—what is the effect of Christianity upon these other systems?"

"I think all the other systems will melt

into Christianity, but Islamism will be the last. And I think Hinduism is already in a state of decay, and that probably Mohammedanism will be the last foe to be destroyed in the Oriental world. But, on the other hand, I have sometimes thought that Islamism will go with a rush when it begins to melt. I do not think that the full time for Mohammedanism has yet come in the East. The Mohammedan falls back a great deal on his political strength. He still thinks he is a big fellow in the fighting world. As a matter of fact, he is getting into very narrow lines. This European war will have a good deal to do with the future of Mohammedanism."

"What has been your position and what your experience in regard to what is often referred to as the doctrine of Holiness, or perfect sanctification?"

"In common with nearly all young people who were really earnest in their religious profession, this doctrine affected me at an early day. I never was reckoned as an opponent to it, and I never was recognized generally in Christian circles as a professor of this grace. I never was quite able to accept

the statement which was made on this subject, by preachers and others, and yet my sympathies were more freely given to them than to those who allowed themselves to be called opponents of such a profession."

"What position did this doctrine hold in your missionary teachings, when you were actually yourself leading others?"

"In India while engaged in missionary work I found opinions and sympathies and professions almost identical with that I had left behind me in America. We had the same variations in testimony, the same questionings concerning the standards to be adopted, the same bouts at certain points. But, as a rule, I found throughout my whole missionary life that persons who had in any marked degree large spiritual power in their work were prepared to accept a profession of unquestioning and absolutely complete satisfaction of all actual spiritual desires in the immediate and actual presence of the living Christ."

## CHAPTER XVIII

## PERSONAL TRIBUTE FROM BISHOP WARNE

We add a brief word from the senior Bishop of India, who has known Bishop Thoburn closely and has been intimately associated with him through many years of service. He speaks not only for himself, but for that great company of Indian fellow workers who rejoiced to follow Bishop Thoburn as a leader, while they loved him as a companion and friend.

The part and place Bishop Asbury had in making the early history of American Methodism, Bishop Thoburn has had in making the early history of our church in Southern Asia. A comparison of the lives of these two men and their careers calls attention to facts in the history of our Church on two continents that are full of interest. For example, Asbury was missionary to the

newest, while Thoburn went to the oldest continent. Neither in the technical sense was a founder of the churches, for each went to his respective field with the second party of missionaries about two years after the first. Further, Asbury was a man of small stature, and in this Bishop Thoburn resembles him, both being about the size of John Wesley, and, like Wesley, each was noted for having good common sense, great tact, quick discernment, restless energy, much patience, far-seeing vision, fervent spirituality, mighty faith, and an iron steadfastness of purpose. Methodist history furnishes the startling coincidence of having three men of such a similar type leaders in the planting of Methodism in three great lands. Both Asbury and Thoburn were acknowledged leaders, each in his own field, before being made bishops. In each field there were about fifteen thousand Christians, when these men were elected. Asbury lived to see two hundred thousand members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, and Thoburn remained effective long enough to see a Methodist Christian community of about two hundred thousand in Southern

Asia.[1] Who can predict what he may yet live to see?

The American branch of Methodism was planted in India, as truly as was the apostolic church, by divinely called and spiritually equipped men and women. A story of these founders and their work, unsurpassed in Methodist history, is yet to be written. James Mills Thoburn early became the recognized leader of these pioneers. Thoburn from being the most influential man in India Methodism soon became widely recognized by the other churches as a man of great spiritual power and as one of the "most distinguished living missionaries in India."

In Bishop Thoburn's unique and highly pleasing personality there was an uncommon blending of practical sense and mysticism, a relieving sense of humor, charming simplicity, winsome sincerity, and prophetic vision. Through the medium of his remarkably clear, strong, and melodious voice, Thoburn had a preaching power that brought an audience under the spell of the messenger and his message after the manner of Bishop

[1] In the years of his retirement this number has nearly doubled.

Simpson, but surpassing Bishop Simpson in power to win men to surrender and serve our crucified, risen, and ascended Lord. This extraordinary combination of graces and gifts in Bishop Thoburn's personality, and the outcome of his life, impel one to believe, that as truly as was Paul, Thoburn was "separated unto the gospel of God" for the people to whom he was sent. May I briefly outline his career under his three distinctive characteristics—Thoburn the Evangelist, Missionary Statesman, and Prophet.

### Thoburn the Evangelist

Getting people genuinely saved was the controlling passion of Bishop Thoburn's whole life. Rev. J. J. Lucas, a senior American Presbyterian missionary in India, tells a characteristic story. "While Thoburn was yet a young man he was sent to Allahabad as a fraternal delegate from the North India Conference to the Presbyterian Synod. I have forgotten," says Dr. Lucas, "the fraternal address, but remember vividly his address to a little company of poor people living in the railway lines, who had invited him to speak to them. This message at once led

to conversions and afterward to the founding of Methodism in Allahabad. He had been sent not as evangelist, but as a delegate, but saw his opportunity. Further, he utilized a Hindu festival holiday for the inauguration of the Lucknow Dasehra Meetings." These meetings have been greatly used in uniting the various denominations in India, and for evangelism for forty years, and have become a model for conventions all over India. Dr. Lucas adds, "The secret of his great success was in that he quickly recognized opportunities for evangelism, and as quickly with courage and hope seized them." Let these two incidents tell a story of evangelism fifty years long. That evangelistic spirit abides in India to this day.

Thoburn's conception of evangelism led to a revolution in India in missionary methods. From the beginning of Indian missions it had been, in the main, the aim of missionaries to secure converts from among the high-caste people, with the hope that since they were the religious leaders of India, they would lead the masses to Christ. The outcome had been exceedingly disappointing. Thoburn and Parker, a David and Jonathan, both

evangelists, with others fired with the same spirit, meditated long upon the fact that Christ was anointed to preach to the "poor," "captives," "blind," and "bruised." They knew that no country had ever been Christianized by a select few. They therefore, followed providential leadings and entered open doors, which in India were found among the lower castes. It requires courage and vision to do the unpopular thing, but this early low-caste work was the forerunner of India's present mass movements, and now other missions are following the lead.

### Thoburn the Missionary Statesman

Thoburn wrote: "A true missionary is no dreamer. He is a practical man. His vision pierces the heavens above him and penetrates far into the dim regions before him. He sees the hand of God upon the nations." How could the writer of that avoid being a missionary statesman? Early in his missionary career he began to look beyond the province, to which our mission was confined, because, it contained only forty million people, and began to look upon the Indian empire and the regions beyond, and to plan

expansion. Here are some of the ways in which he showed his statesmanship.

Thoburn early saw a similarity between the Roman and British empires. He recalled the way in which the Roman empire had united nations, built great connecting roads, and caused the spread of two great languages, and thus unwittingly, while opposing Christianity, was opening its way. He believed that what the Roman empire had been to the Mediterranean region the British empire was to be to the Eastern world, for on her ships the whole Far East was easily reached. He saw that it covered three times the territory of the Roman empire and included many times more people, and that a common language was spreading through all the East. He believed that the British empire had been raised up by infinite wisdom and for a purpose divine.

Within these empires Thoburn saw a similarity between the "Dispersion of the Jews" and the "Anglo-Saxon Dispersion," which he believed would go on increasing through the centuries. Early from his mountain home he looked out over this empire, and years before William Taylor ar-

rived in India, Thoburn had sent to a brother missionary "A plan for getting Taylor out to India, and having him open our way to all the great cities of the empire by preaching in English to the English-speaking people," and to this end had invited Taylor to India. When Taylor came he joined him in work among Europeans, and as an outcome his mountain visions were realized, and the great church Thoburn built and maintained in Calcutta made him known throughout India and the Methodist world. The Europeans lived chiefly in the great cities, and their evangelism and organization into churches led to the establishment of our church in all the great cities, except one, from Quetta to Manila, a distance of over five thousand miles. This work among Europeans planted Methodism in city centers that influence over four hundred and fifty million people. Great was such statesmanship.

The zenana and caste system, child-marriage and enforced widowhood, had made the condition of India's women so desperate that missionaries had not found a pathway for their deliverance, education, and evangelization. Meditating long upon the awfulness

of their situation, Dr. Thoburn at last earnestly invited his own sister to come to India. Here again the missionary statesman saw the need, the way out, and made the call to America's Christian womanhood to come to the relief of Asia's Christless womanhood. American Methodist women responded, and we have our great Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, now blessing the women of all non-Christian lands.

As a missionary statesman, Thoburn was as much interested in the church at home as on the mission field. Some have even thought that the greatest work of his life for India, and the missionary world generally, is to be found in what he did by way of enlightening, inspiring, and enthusing the home churches. For many years he worked to secure an organization as an educating and collecting agency in each congregation. It was his constant contention that to obey the farewell commandment of our Lord, "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations," was the chief business of Christ's church, and that our people had to no small extent paralyzed their power by relegating the cause of foreign missions to being but

"one of the benevolences," instead of being the chief work for which the Church of Jesus Christ exists.

Thoburn led the agitation for a resident bishop on our foreign mission fields. Further his famous article in the Methodist Review, on "Methodist Episcopacy in Transition," in 1895, initiated the agitation which after the lapse of thirteen years culminated in our present "plan of residential episcopal supervision," which in all its main features is what he had outlined. In his persistent agitation for such residential and closer supervision both abroad and at home, was he not away ahead of his time? Is not his statesmanlike vision now manifest to the whole church?

### Thoburn the Prophet

"I have ordained thee as a prophet to the nations." God had spoken into the heart of Thoburn as surely as into the heart of Jeremiah. To Thoburn the word "prophet" meant not only "foretelling" but "forth-telling" God's gospel message through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He believed himself as much a man sent from God as

was John, and therefore on a moral pedestal above that of the kings of the earth. He believed that it was never necessary, even to demon worshipers, to prove the existence of a Supreme Being, but that the story of a divine Saviour everywhere in the non-Christian world was new. In Christ's holy life, dying love, risen power, and enthroned glory he always found a thrilling message of light, life, hope, salvation, and holy triumph for "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" on the face of the whole earth. Therefore when preaching, his voice, countenance, and message were all aglow with prophetic and holy enthusiasm. His favorite testimony was "While I preach the Man of Calvary is by my side"; and in this assurance, so real to him, the great secret of his life is told. He believed that the time would surely come when there would be a Stephen filled with the Holy Spirit bearing witness on the streets of every village on the face of the whole earth.

A word of personal testimony: Well do I remember how, in my young manhood, I came under the spell of Bishop Thoburn's virile prophetic messages, and how I was

made to see, in their ignorance, the helpless, hopeless, hungry millions of India, and also that they would yet have an eternal inheritance in and with Jesus Christ; and that I might help a little I answered the call, and with many others have given my life to bring to pass the things that Bishop Thoburn saw in vision. Truly, he was a prophet to the nations; many of his prophecies have been fulfilled, and others are very rapidly being fulfilled. O how we love him!

Let me close with what I think is Bishop Thoburn's greatest challenge to the Church of Jesus Christ. It sets forth his optimism, breadth of outlook for Christ's church, evangelistic fervor, world-embracing statesmanship, prophetic vision, and apostolic enthusiasm. Here it is:

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES, THE LESSONS OF THE PAST, THE INDICATIONS OF THE FUTURE, THE CALL OF PROVIDENCE, AND THE VOICES WHICH COME BORNE TO US BY EVERY BREEZE, AND FROM EVERY NATION UNDER HEAVEN, ALL ALIKE BID US LAY OUR PLANS ON A SCALE WORTHY OF MEN WHO EXPECT TO CONQUER A WORLD.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

MAR 27 1918

form 410